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Trump's White House to witness clash of titans in octagon-shaped cage on June 14 as it **hosts Ultimate Fighting Championship bouts on South Lawn,** part of 250th anniv celebrations of founding of the US, Pg opp

Marilyn Monroe's memorabilia heading to auction block, offering glimpse of her personal life. Items include pieces from her wardrobe, jewellery, handwritten notes, paintings and poetry, Page opp

Chinese and US officials will hold talks in South Korea next week, Beijing's commerce ministry and Washington's treasury secretary say, ahead of expected summit between Xi and Trump, Page opp

Q Manivannan, non-binary transgender Indian and former PhD student, born in Tamil Nadu, becomes **1st person to be elected to Scottish Parliament despite being a foreign citizen who doesn't have permanent visa** to live in the UK, Pg opp

PM pushes for cut in fuel use & gold buying, favours WFH

'Need To Save Fgn Exchange Amid War Crisis'

Sribala Vadlapatla & Atul Mathur

'AVOID UNNECESSARY FOREIGN TRAVEL'

- PM Modi appeals to citizens to **use public transport such as Metro.** 'If we must use a car, then we should try to **carpool...** People with **EVs** should try to use them as much as possible'
- Says **work-from-home, online meetings** were adopted during Covid pandemic. Such practices can be restarted **'in national interest'**
- Advises people to **avoid non-essential gold buying for 1 year** to reduce pressure on foreign exchange outflows
- **Asks farmers to reduce chemical fertiliser usage by 50%,** help cut import dependence, go for solar-powered pumps
- Advises people to conserve foreign exchange reserves by avoiding unnecessary foreign travel, weddings & vacations; **choose domestic tourism**

Hyderabad/New Delhi: Amid global energy supply disruption, PM Narendra Modi on Sunday urged people to use public transport and revive work from home to reduce dependence on petrol and diesel — which largely come from imported crude — and conserve foreign exchange by avoiding overseas weddings and vacations as well as unnecessary gold purchases.

The suggestions, seen as the most drastic call by the PM, at an event in Hyderabad come as the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz nears 75 days with govt tapping multiple sources to procure oil and gas, whose supplies have been hit, pushing up crude prices for Indian refiners for the third straight month. So far, oil companies have not raised pump prices but are expected to do so over the next few days. While several countries have resorted to WFH and other options to reduce fuel consumption, apart from increasing fuel prices, India has so far avoided such steps. In recent months, high energy and gold and silver prices have pushed up India's trade deficit as export growth has also moderated.

Modi asked people to avoid non-essential gold purchases for a year and put off unnecessary foreign travel, and called for bringing back Covid-era efficiency steps such as WFH arrangements in national interest. He also urged businesses to opt for moving goods by rail, and asked individuals to avoid unnecessary travel and car pool and use EVs. "If we make a few small changes for a year, we can save substantial foreign exchange," he said. Amid a hit to fertiliser supply, he also suggested farmers halve the use of chemical fertilisers and shift to natural farming in some cases.

He invoked patriotism to argue it is not just about one's life for India but also about living responsibly and fulfilling duties towards the country during difficult times. He called for collective participation to help India face global economic disruptions, supply chain challenges and rising prices caused by international conflicts.

"Today, the need of the hour is to use petrol, gas, diesel and similar resources with restraint. We must use imported petroleum products only as needed. This will not only save foreign exchange but also reduce the adverse impact of war," he said. India imports nearly 90% of its crude requirement as domestic output has been shrinking.

▶Make in India, P 8

I'll be the only power centre, says Vijay after taking oath as TN CM

His First Orders: Free Power, Task Force For Women, Anti-Drugs Teams

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'BELONG EQUALLY TO HINDUS, MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS'

Photo: L R Shankar

Vijay takes a selfie with Congress' Rahul Gandhi and newly inducted minister N Anand at the swearing-in on Sunday

"IT IS A FRESH, NEW BEGINNING. A NEW ERA OF REAL, SECULAR, SOCIAL JUSTICE STARTS. NOW! (pointing to his watch)

You can trust Vijay 100%. I belong equally to Hindus, Muslims and Christians

I am not an angel... give me some time. I will gradually fulfil what I promised. I will do only what is possible

— C Joseph Vijay

▶Cong yet to name Kerala CM, suspense on, P 8 ▶Himanta to take oath as Assam CM tomorrow, P 8 ▶ Suvendu aide case spreads to J'khand, P 8

Chennai: Years of fan worship, political speculation and blockbuster charisma culminated in a historic swearing-in Sunday as TVK chief C Joseph Vijay assumed office as TN's 18th CM at the head of a fragile but numerically secure coalition — becoming the first politician from a non-Dravidian party to occupy Fort St George since 1962.

Governor R V Arlekar administered the oath at Chennai's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium before a roaring crowd of TVK cadre, film personalities and alliance functionaries. Congress MP Rahul Gandhi sat beside Vijay, underscoring the coalition arithmetic that brought the new govt to office. Nine ministers, including N Anand, Aadhav Arjuna and KA Sengottaiyan, were sworn in alongside 51-year-old Vijay.

Roars of "Thalapathy" drowned out traffic and protocol in Chennai as the state watched another film star become CM. For lakhs of fans raised on his punch dialogues, the line from Thuppakki (2012) — "I am waiting" — suddenly sounded less cinematic. His wait is over, as is his fans'.

In remarks seen as aimed at internal factions, Vijay declared there would be only "one power centre" in TVK on his watch. "If anyone thinks that after victory they can misuse power, erase that thought immediately," he said.

Minutes after assuming office, Vijay signed orders granting up to 200 units of free electricity to houses using less than 500 units. He cleared formation of a "Singappen" special task force for women's safety and ordered anti-narco units in all districts and cities.

▶'Give me time', P 8

IANS

LAST-BALL THRILLER: Krunal Pandya's 73 and Bhuvneshwar Kumar's all-round heroics (4/23, 7 critical runs off 2 balls) powered Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a nervy two-wicket victory and knocked Mumbai Indians from IPL playoff race in Raipur Sunday | P11

Yogi inducts 3 OBCs, 2 Dalits, 1 Brahmin as UP ministers

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday inducted six new ministers in his cabinet, including three OBC faces and two Dalits, ahead of 2027 asembly polls. The lone upper-caste entrant was SP rebel MLA Manoj Pandey, a Brahmin who cross-voted for BJP in RS elections last year. P 6

Probe launched into NEET malpractice

Four days after NEET 2026 UG was held, law enforcement agencies have initiated a probe into alleged malpractices linked to the medical entrance following inputs received by National Testing Agency from Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, **reports Hemali Chhapia.** P 6

For benefits, 90-day rule for gig workers

Gig and platform workers need to work minimum 90 days annually with an aggregator to avail social security benefits, as per the Code on Social Security. If a worker is engaged with multiple aggregators, the threshold is raised to 120 days. P 9

After big wins, NDA sitting comfortably for 2027 prez polls

New Delhi: BJP's supermajority win in a string of assembly polls, capped by its maiden victory in West Bengal with over two-thirds seats, and its rising number in Rajya Sabha will all but allow the party to dictate terms in next year's presidential election, after its loss of majority in Lok Sabha polls had raised doubts over its dominant run since 2014, **reports Kumar Rakesh.**

Its domination of assemblies with allies in big states like Maharashtra, Bengal and Bihar — three assemblies with maximum weight among states after UP in the electoral college for president — will be effective in neutralising the loss it has suffered in LS where its tally fell from 303 to 240 in 2024.

▶Fall in LS tally, P 8

Modi: Congress arrogant, parasite and betrayed ally DMK to share TN power

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Bengaluru: PM Modi Sunday called Congress "a parasite and backstabber" which dumped decades-old ally DMK and threw its weight behind Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in Tamil Nadu for the sake of power.

He said Congress was losing hold in the country, while BJP was making inroads, including in Kerala. The PM was addressing a rally at HAL Airport before heading to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living International Center.

"They attack the Constitution, democracy, constitutional institutions and courts. In my public life, I've never seen a political party behave like this," he said, terming the party "arrogant".

IANS

Modi in Bengaluru on Sunday. He said governance in K'taka has taken a back seat due to internal conflict

▶Governance collapsing, P 5

Gelatin scare near PM's AOL route

Two gelatin sticks were found about 25ft from the PM's convoy route to the AOL campus, Kanakapura Road, Sunday. The discovery came 90 minutes before Modi's convoy was scheduled to pass. Police said there was no immediate danger of an explosion because no detonator was found. P 5

K'taka minister Sudhakar dies at 66; govt declares 3-day mourning

Bengaluru: Karnataka planning and statistics minister **D Sudhakar**, who was ailing from lung infection for about a month, passed away at a private hospital here Sunday. He was 66.

Sudhakar was admitted to the hospital two months ago for a knee replacement surgery but picked up lung infection during treatment. The infection deteriorated and the minister was declared dead at 3.15am. A holiday has been announced for Chitradurga district, home turf, on Monday. He represented Hiriyur constituency in the district.

A 3-day state mourning has been declared as a mark of respect to the late minister.

▶ May name project, P 5

Noel Tata part of 3-1 vote against Srinivasan, Singh at Tata edu trust

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Mumbai: Noel Tata has voted against the reappointment of Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh as trustees of the Tata Education and Development Trust (TEDT), the largest corpus trust within Tata Trusts, in a move that widens fault lines within one of India's most powerful philanthropic structures. It marks the first time Noel has made his opposition to the duo unequivocal.

The vote, last of four cast, added to a verdict that had already been sealed when Mehli Mistry first opposed the duo's extension, shortly after the trusteeship renewal circular was issued.

Under TEDT rules, reappointments need unanimous consent among trustees—a threshold already foreclosed by Mehli's vote. Jehangir Mistry subsequently voted against both men as well.

Srinivasan and Singh had each voted in favour of the other. The tally stood at 3-1 against each of them. Their tenures in an influential Tata trust that supports projects in India and abroad, formally expired on Sunday, May 10.

FRACTURE SHOWS: (Clockwise from left top) Noel Tata, Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh

▶Widening rift, P 9

Bullseye! Women archers beat hosts China, bag World Cup gold

Kolkata: A long, excruciating five-year wait is finally over. The trio of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and 17-year-old Kumkum Mohod conjured up a top-of-the-podium finish beating hosts China in the final of Archery World Cup Stage II in Shanghai on Sunday, **report Archiman Bhaduri & Daniyal Abdulla.**

In an exciting summit clash, India rallied from a 2-4 deficit to outclass China 5-4 (28-26) in shoot-offs after the four-set regulation ended 4-4. India thus finished their campaign with two medals after compound archer Sahil Jadhav opened the country's account winning a bronze on Saturday. Simranjeet Kaur lost her semifinal match later in the day.

▶ Good direction, P 12

B'desh can be a referee between India, China, but not football: Tarique aide

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Bangladesh will not be a "football" between India and China, PM Tarique Rahman's foreign affairs adviser Humaiun Kobir has said, stressing on a 'Bangladesh first policy', maintaining ties with major global powers, including India, China and the US. His remarks come as Dhaka looks at balancing bilateral relations with several nations, especially those in its neighbourhood, through cooperation in various areas, including infrastructure, trade, energy, among others.

"We can act as a referee from time to time to ensure fair play, but we will not become a football," Kobir said at a roundtable discussion Saturday, hinting at Dhaka's intentions to play a bigger role in the region, when asked about its ties with China and India. "Bangladesh would maintain balanced ties with both nations while firmly safeguarding its own national interests," he said, while describing China as an "important development partner" for Bangladesh.

▶B'desh HC rejects Hindu monk's bail plea, Pg opp

2025 conflict a battle of 2 ideologies: Munir

Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir on Sunday called last year's conflict with India a "battle between two ideologies" and warned against future "misadventure". Pg opp

▶Not a weakness: Pg opp

B'luru boy, 10, killed in MM Hills leopard attack

Mysuru: A 10-year-old boy from Bengaluru was attacked and killed by a leopard in MM Hills of Hanur taluk in Chamarajanagar district on Sunday. This is the second such incident in the area in three months, **reports S Ramesh.**

A group of 10 devotees, including Harshith and his parents from Laggere, arrived at MM Hills on Saturday. They stayed at MM Hills Guest House after darshan at Male Mahadeshwara temple, about 210km from Bengaluru. They set off on padayatra to Nagamale after collecting a ticket from the forest department at 6am.

The leopard attacked the boy on the Nagamale stretch near Indiganatha settlement and dragged him 200 metres into the woods.

▶Relief sought, P 4

India, UAE working on pact to help in evacuation of Indians via Fujairah port

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and UAE are working on an agreement that will help in evacuation of lakhs of Indian workers through the port of Fujairah, and it is likely to be signed during the stopover added to PM Modi's itinerary, signalling another crucial link to the already strong bilateral ties.

The PM is due to leave for Europe on May 15 with a stopover in Fujairah and then depart for the Netherlands, before visiting Sweden, Norway and Italy.

The first-of-its-kind treaty comes amid disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict, which saw thousands stranded in the Gulf amid flights getting affected. While life is slowly returning to normal, the pact can be useful in future as Fujairah is west of the Strait of Hormuz, which has emerged as the main chokepoint in the war.

SHIP ATTACKED

- **Iran responds to US's latest peace proposal,** after drones threaten several Gulf targets. Tehran **warns it will not hold back** from retaliating against any new US strikes
- **Drone strike briefly sets cargo vessel afire in Persian Gulf.** The ship from Abu Dhabi continues to Qatar port after blaze is doused
- Israeli forces establish a **makeshift base using an old airstrip in Iraq's desert**
- Iran's Oil Terminals Co **denies reports of an oil leak near Kharg Island** Page opp

In case of problems with air traffic, lakhs of Indians working in the UAE can be evacuated by ship, according to govt's calculations. West Asia is home to nearly 10 million Indian workers, with nearly 4.3 million in the UAE.

In the current conflict, Fujairah, which was the likely starting point of the proposed India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, also serves as an alternative for shipping goods to the UAE as access to the Dubai port has been cut off. Khor Fakkar is the other port that is being used to ship goods, which are then moved by road. Iran has targeted Fujairah for precisely the same reason. The PM's visit signals India's support for the UAE, which has been under attack from Iran.

It also comes amid the UAE's exit from OPEC, the powerful oil cartel, due to its perceived differences with Saudi Arabia. Given India's close ties with the UAE in recent years, experts are expecting the country to be a major gainer, especially as countries such as Saudi Arabia charges an Asian premium on crude sold by it.

Once tendu leaf collector, now forest officer

Raipur: A young man who once spent his childhood collecting tendu leaves and mahua has made it to one of the country's most prestigious civil services. Ajay Gupta, son of a tendu leaf collector from Sambalpuri village in Raigarh district, has secured an All India Rank of 91 in this year's Indian Forest Service (IFS) exam, scripting a journey from forest floors to the frontline of conservation, **reports Rashmi Drolia.**

The 29-year-old told **TOI** that he also cleared the civil services exam with 452 rank this year. Raised in a modest forest-dependent household, Ajay grew up assisting his family in gathering minor forest produce, a livelihood that defines thousands of families across Chhattisgarh.

▶Success stories, P 7

Niti Aayog report: School access up, but continuity remains a stress point

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New Delhi: India's school education system has solved much of the "getting children into school" challenge, but is struggling with a tougher problem — keeping them there long enough to complete secondary & higher secondary education.

The stress points are now visible higher up the schooling ladder — Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) drops from 90.9% at primary level to 58.4% at higher secondary, while secondary-stage dropout rate rises sharply to 11.5% from 0.3% at primary, according to a new Niti Aayog report.

The report — School Education System in India: Temporal Analysis and Policy Roadmap for Quality Enhancement — paints a picture of a vast, but uneven system comprising over 14.7 lakh schools, almost 24.7 crore students and over 1 crore teachers, with the sharpest cracks now emerging beyond the elementary stage.

It says the system today is "strongest on basic access and weakest on continuity, inclusion, and learning depth".

The numbers illustrate the challenge clearly. India's GER stands at 90.9% at primary stage and 90.3% at upper primary, but falls sharply to 78.7% at secondary, and further to 58.4% at higher-secondary level. Transition rates weaken steadily as students move up the system. While 92.2% of students move from primary to upper primary, the rate falls to 86.6% between upper primary and secondary, and to 75.1% between secondary and higher secondary.

DROPOUT WORRIES

- **Enrolment ratio** stood at 90.9% in primary stage, 90.3% in upper primary, but **dipped to 78.7% at secondary, 58.4% at higher secondary,** shows data between 2014 & 2025
- **Secondary dropout rate jumped sharply to 11.5%** from just 0.3% at primary and 3.5% at upper primary levels

▶Dropout rate, P 7

Boeing exec front-runner for space PSU chief post

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Bengaluru: India's space PSU NewSpace India may soon be headed by a private sector veteran with the selection process for the chairman and managing director post having entered the final leg.

Sources confirmed to **TOI** that the next CMD of the Space PSU is expected to be from the private sector with a senior person from US aerospace major Boeing as the frontrunner. This will be the first time a non-DoS (Department of Space) person would head Isro's commercial arm.

A source said the person occupies an important position at Boeing India, before which he had worked with European aerospace major Airbus. "Before moving to private sector, he had worked with DRDO and has a long career that spans both R&D and business operations."

COULD BE 1ST OUTSIDER

- If the Boeing veteran is appointed, he will become the **first from private sector to head operational wing of space dept**
- Since incorporation in 2019, **NSIL has been headed by Isro insiders** either on deputation or formal appointment
- According to sources, panel has shortlisted five persons and **final order is yet to be formalised**

▶Applications invited, P6

Cohabitation decree not a shield against maintenance: K'taka HC

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Bengaluru: Restoration of conjugal rights doesn't stop a woman from claiming maintenance, particularly when she has sufficient reasons to live separately from her husband, Karnataka high court has ruled.

The court said the wife had demonstrated sufficient cause to live separately due to allegations of harassment. The judge noted that although the husband had secured a decree for restitution of conjugal rights, he had made no effort to enforce it.

Justice K Manmadha Rao made the observation, increasing maintenance awarded to a woman from Tumakuru and her two minor sons. The court directed the husband, a postal department employee, to pay Rs 10,000 a month to his wife, and retained the family court's order granting Rs 8,000 each to their two sons until they attain majority.

> If the husband was genuinely interested in resuming cohabitation, he ought to have taken steps to execute the decree (restitution of conjugal rights). His failure to do so indicates the decree was used merely as a defence to avoid maintenance... Maintenance is a statutory and continuing obligation of the husband towards his wife and children —K'taka high court

The couple married in 2012 and have two sons aged 13 and 11 years. Following marital disputes, the wife began living separately, alleging harassment and ill-treatment by her husband and mother-in-law.

In 2024, a family court in Tumakuru awarded Rs 8,000 per month each to the wife and children, along with Rs 5,000 towards litigation expenses. Seeking enhancement, the wife argued before the high court that her husband earned over Rs 50,000 monthly from his postal department job and also generated additional agricultural income.

▶Support mother too, P 4

Bangalore Times

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Saif and Ibrahim redefine modern linen style

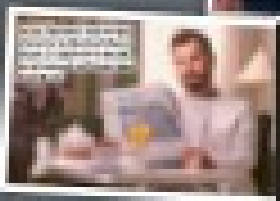
Buzzstop

TAYLOR SWIFT AND TRAVIS KELCE PLANNING A LONDON CELEBRATION AFTER THEIR NYC WEDDING

Dua Lipa files $15 million lawsuit over unauthorised use of her image

From $31M to $42M

'Most-hated' Met Gala marks monumental success

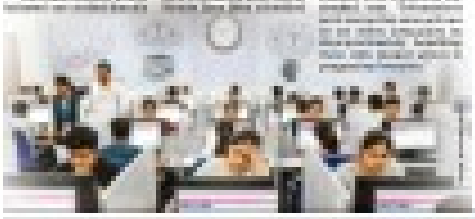


THE TIMES OF INDIA

Education TIMES

THE PATH TO EXCELLENCE

Students worried over 'no-break' 3-hour CUET UG exam format



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Vande Rush: Chennai route leads ridership surge, others see mixed trend

Services Linked To Bengaluru

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Bengaluru: Three years after it first rolled out, South India's maiden Vande Bharat Express continues to race ahead in popularity. The Mysuru-Chennai service (train number 20607/20608), flagged off on Nov 11, 2022, remains Bengaluru's most successful semi-high-speed train, clocking the highest revenue among all Vande Bharat services connected to the city, according to data released by South Western Railway (SWR) recently.

The Chennai-Mysuru service, passing through Bengaluru, recorded an average 119.8% booking rate in 2025-26. Over 4 lakh passengers travelled on the route last fiscal, helping the railways earn Rs 41.2 crore. The return journey from Mysuru to Chennai followed closely behind, carrying 3.9 lakh passengers and generating Rs 39.6 crore in revenue.

Driven by the demand, the railways introduced a second VB (train number 20663/20664) on the same corridor. The additional Mysuru-Chennai service has emerged as the most overbooked Vande Bharat routed via Bengaluru, touching a 127% booking rate while ferrying over 2 lakh passengers.

Pics: TOI

MOST SOUGHT-AFTER SERVICES

Vande Bharat	Trips completed	Booking percentage	Revenue (in ₹cr)	Passengers carried
Chennai-Mysuru (20607)	312	119.9	41.2	4.2 lakh
Mysuru-Chennai (20608)	312	111.4	39.6	3.9 lakh
Chennai-Mysuru (20664)	313	89.8	21	1.9 lakh
Mysuru-Chennai (20663)	313	127.05	20.2	2.1 lakh
Hyderabad-B'luru	313	89.74	37.7	2.7 lakh
B'luru-Hyderabad	313	90.62	39.3	2.7 lakh
Ernakulam-B'luru	121	141.71	11.1	90,885
B'luru-Ernakulam	121	126.95	10.3	81,418

NOT-SO-POPULAR ROUTES

B'luru-B'gavi	199	86.2	11.4	90,877
B'gavi-B'luru	199	64.3	8.9	67,821
B'luru-Madurai	312	78.9	26.9	2.1 lakh
Madurai-B'luru	312	68.5	22.3	1.9

Figures for 2025-26 | Source: SWR

The Bengaluru-Hyderabad VB is also doing well. Operating now with 16-coach rakes, the Yeshwantpur-Kacheguda service maintains around 90% occupancy in both directions and contributes nearly Rs 76 crore in combined revenue annually. "Just like the Chennai one, the Hyderabad VB initially had more than 100% occupancy. After its conversion to a 16-car rake, the numbers have slightly dipped, but the revenue is almost similar," a senior South Western Railway official said.

VB IN THE PIPELINE

Mumbai CSMT- KSR Bengaluru sleeper
- **Status:** To be flagged off by Aug

Bengaluru-Madgaon
- **Status:** Proposed

Bengaluru-Mangaluru
- **Status:** Approved by ministry, awaiting notification

B'gavi, Madurai service lags

Certain routes through Bengaluru face quite the opposite fortunes. The recently launched Bengaluru-Belagavi Vande Bharat struggles with its ridership.

The service starting from Belagavi has the lowest booking percentage of 64.3, generating just Rs 8.9 crore in revenue between Aug 2025 and April 2026. Though the service from Bengaluru to Belagavi has a slightly better booking of 86%, it is yet to become a passenger favourite.

The Belagavi-Bengaluru service in Aug carried more than 5,300 passengers, in Sept it rose to 7,491 passengers, and Oct peaked with 9,273 passengers. Sources also emphasise that the evening departure timing from Belagavi has affected bookings. "Bookings improved from 55% to 67%. Earnings also increased monthly," the zone said, drawing parallels to the Kalaburagi route, which climbed up to a 93% occupancy after an initial 42% when it started.

Another service struggling to gain popularity is the Bengaluru-Madurai VB. From the 312 trips completed in the past fiscal, the service generated an underwhelming booking percentage of 68.5. The return direction saw a slight improvement to 78.9% but is yet to match the figures for the other trains running along the route.

Ernakulam route popular

If there is a semi-high-speed train that could match the popularity of Chennai Vande Bharat, it is its Ernakulam counterpart. Launched in Nov last year, the train has already carried more than 1.7 lakh passengers across both directions till March.

Within five months, the service earned the railways a revenue of more than Rs 10 crore each in both directions with the booking percentage crossing 120%. Despite significant demand and high waiting list numbers, the train still runs with an eight-coach rake. "That decision (to increase coaches) should come from the railway board. As of now, there is no concrete movement," SWR's chief public relations officer Manjunath Kanamadi told **TOI.**

Family wins relief for blast that left 2 scarred for life

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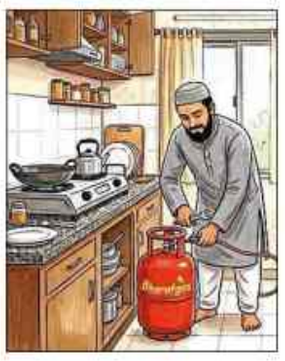

On June 4, 2012, Shah was attempting to fit the regulator onto an LPG cylinder supplied by Shivaneel Gas Agency, an authorised Indane distributor of Indian Oil Corporation, when a sudden and severe gas leak occurred

Bengaluru: Fourteen years after Aboobacker's attempt to fix an LPG regulator triggered a cylinder blast, injuring five people, including two minors, the victims secured partial relief. However, after hearing both sides, the state commission set aside the earlier district commission order and enhanced the amount to Rs 5 lakh, saying compensation must justify the harm done and injuries suffered.

The saga began on June 4, 2012, when Shah attempted to attach the regulator to a freshly delivered LPG cylinder supplied by Shivaneel Gas Agency — an authorised Indane distributor operating under Indian Oil Corporation — and there was a sudden and violent gas leakage. The cylinder burst into flames, the fire engulfed the kitchen and spread through the house, causing grievous burn injuries to five people.

CONSUMER IS KING

Among the victims were two young girls — Masumsha, four-year-old daughter of house owner Mohammed Kalandar Shah, and Fahma, seven-year-old daughter of Aboobacker. Both children suffered 39% burns. The other three victims — Aboobacker, his wife Sarfana and their relative Bifathima — sustained 8%, 14% and 11% burns, respectively. All five were rushed to govt hospital, Aldur, and subsequently shifted to MG Hospital, Holy Cross Hospital and Kasturba Hospital in Chikkamagaluru, where they were inpatients from June 4 to June 18, incurring significant medical expenses.

Following the incident, a police complaint was registered, and representatives of Indian Oil Corporation and Shivaneel Gas Agency visited the site. The matter was reported for settlement under the public liability policy held by Indian Oil Corporation with National Insurance Company, Chikkamagaluru branch. However, no compensation was forthcoming. Alleging serious deficiency in service, the five victims filed separate consumer complaints before district consumer disputes redressal commission, Chikkamagaluru.

The commission, after a full hearing, passed its order on Dec 17, 2016, partly allowing the complaints. It directed the insurance company to pay compensation of Rs 4.5 lakh, including medical expenses, an additional Rs 10,000 as compensation and Rs 1,000 as litigation costs to each complainant. The complaints against Indian Oil Corporation and Shivaneel Gas Agency were dismissed.

Unsatisfied, all five complainants filed appeals before Karnataka State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in 2017, seeking enhancement of the compensation amounts. They alleged the victims suffered severe burn injuries, underwent prolonged hospitalisation, incurred heavy medical expenses and endured lasting facial disfigurement, and that the compensation awarded fell far short of what justice demanded.

National Insurance Company and Indian Oil Corporation argued the public liability policy carried a ceiling of Rs 1 lakh per person and that the incident was attributable to the negligence of the customer in attempting to fix the regulator without any technical knowledge or assistance from the dealer.

The commission on March 23, after going through all documents, concluded that while the compensation awarded to Masumsha and Fahma was adequate and required no enhancement, the amounts granted to the remaining three complainants were disproportionately low.

Accordingly, the bench dismissed appeals filed by the two minors and allowed appeals enhancing the compensation from Rs 40,000 to Rs 50,000 for Bifathima, from Rs 60,000 to Rs 75,000 for Aboobacker, and from Rs 50,000 to Rs 70,000 for Sarfana. The rest of the district commission's order was kept intact.

New Navy chief born and bred in B'luru

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: As Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan prepares to take over as the country's next Navy chief on May 31, Bengaluru can lay claim to a quiet connection to the top naval officer.

Swaminathan, who was appointed the next Chief of Naval Staff Saturday, is a Bengaluru-born officer who grew up in Basavanagudi's NR Colony in a family of teachers. His early schooling was at Bishop Cotton Boys' School, one of the city's oldest institutions, before he moved to Sainik School, Vijayapura, setting him on the path to a military career. The school continues to count him among its distinguished alumni and had hosted him last year in his capacity as Vice Chief of Naval Staff.

Credit: Bishop Cottons Boys' School website

Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan at Bishop Cottons Boys' School in 2024

"During his visit, Vice Admiral Swaminathan presented the institution with a model of INS Vikrant, India's first aircraft carrier along with beautifully framed photographs of the same. This gesture symbolised the strong ties between the school and its esteemed alumni, as well as the enduring legacy of Cottonians who continue to make significant contributions to the nation," the school's website reads.

Sainik School proud

Swaminathan joined Sainik School Bijapur in 1977. He has repeatedly acknowledged the school as "dearer to us than our very homes" and credited it for his knowledge, education and values.

Former students of the school, popularly known as "Ajeets", described his elevation as a proud moment. International Ajeets president and retired IPS officer Gopal Hosur recalled Swaminathan as a humble yet exceptionally professional officer. Senior advocate Satish Maneshindhe, another alumnus of the school, said Swaminathan had shown leadership traits from his student days itself: "He was an all-rounder and school captain."

Man promises to repair old car, vanishes

Bengaluru: A 79-year-old industrialist approached police to trace his missing old Ambassador car. An acquaintance's promise to help repair the vehicle and return it has now turned into an alleged cheating case as the man went incommunicado four months ago.

HSR Layout resident Srinivas Reddy K told police the accused is Rudra Bhel V, aged around 25 years and a resident of Noida. Rudra, who claimed to be a used car dealer, was introduced to Reddy by a friend.

Reddy owns the Ambassador car (MDO 4931), which was registered before Independence. Reddy told TOI the car is very sentimental to him as his father used it. The car was given to his father by a motor company based in Tamil Nadu. Reddy modified the vehicle in the past, and it later developed issues with engine and power steering. He parked the car near a fuel station in Mangammanapalya, close to his office, while awaiting repairs.

Like many owners of old vehicles, Reddy was looking for someone reliable who could help get the car repaired. That is when Rudra stepped in and told Reddy confidently he would arrange to repair the vehicle and return it within a few days.

Reddy handed over the vehicle to Rudra four months ago. Since then, Rudra has gone missing. All his phone numbers are switched off, Reddy told police officials. TNN

Tackling trash: BSWML to float tenders for 3 plants

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Bengaluru: Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) is set to float tenders worth Rs 125.5 crore for three large material recovery facilities (MRFs) to process 1,226 tonnes of dry waste daily. The move is aimed at reducing the city's dependence on landfills while strengthening recycling and scientific waste segregation systems.

This will be BSWML's third attempt to award the projects. "We had no bidders for the past two bids. We will soon call for the third bid," a BSWML official said. The proposed facilities will come up at Tharahunase, Subbarayanapalya and Doddabidarakallu. Of the three, the Tharahunase plant will be the largest, designed to process 826 tonnes per day (TPD) at an estimated cost of Rs 76.4 crore. The other two facilities, at Subbarayanapalya and Doddabidarakallu, will each process 200 TPD and are estimated to cost Rs 20.7 crore and Rs 28.4 crore, respectively.

The projects will be executed through a turnkey design-build-transfer model, with contractors responsible for design, construction, installation and commissioning, and must be completed within 12 months of award. The projects are being proposed under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0. According to BSWML, the city generates nearly 6,500 tonnes of solid waste daily, excluding bulk waste. Unlike conventional dumping systems, MRFs are planned as mechanised processing hubs equipped with conveyor belts, trommels, vibratory screens, magnetic separators, air classifiers, shredders and balers to segregate recyclable materials and produce refuse-derived fuel (RDF).

The projects, open to manufacturers, firms and consortiums, aim to maximise recyclable recovery, cut transportation and disposal costs, extend landfill lifespan and generate livelihood opportunities.

FOCUS ON RECYCLING

The facilities will also include pre-engineered sheds, storage spaces, weighbridges, RFID-enabled scanners, odour-control systems, leachate collection tanks and digital monitoring systems intended to improve tracking and accountability in waste movement. BSWML said the projects are aligned with Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, which emphasise maximum resource recovery and prohibit untreated waste from being sent to landfills.

While Bengaluru currently has around 112 dry waste collection centres, officials said the proposed MRFs are intended to process dry waste in much larger volumes and improve deeper segregation of recyclable materials before they are sent to recycling industries.

Community carnival wraps up in Nandini Layout

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Several residents gathered for the third and final edition of Happy Streets in Nandini Layout Sunday, with music, art and games marking the morning. The stretch of 3rd Cross near Oxford Secondary School also saw Mother's Day-themed performances, including skits, songs and dance segments centred on maternal love.

A Times of India initiative presented by Bhima Jewellers, the event began with a meditation session by Heartfulness, followed by yoga and pranayama led by Sarvebhavanthu Sukhinah Yoga. Zumba sessions by Swingers Dance Inc set the pace, followed by a Dollu Kunita folk performance. The Bhima mannequin challenge, lucky draw and photobooth drew steady participation.

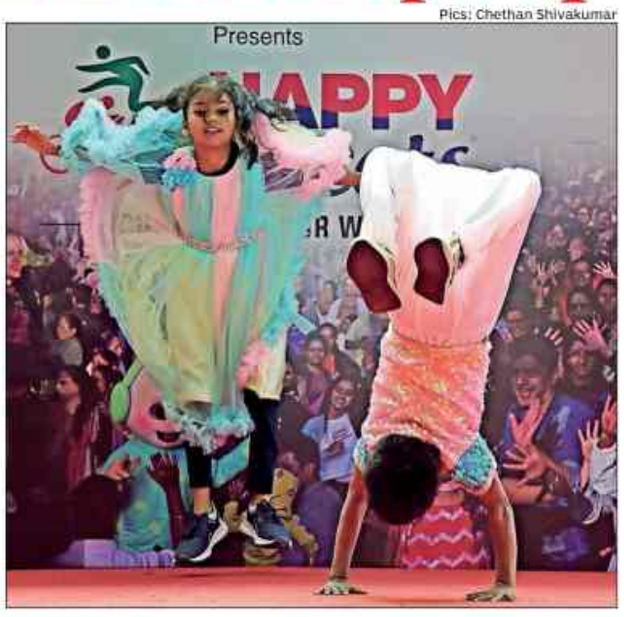
QShala's My India Quest quiz card game saw children lining up to test their general knowledge. At the Reclaim Constitution stall, visitors printed copies of the Kannada version of the Preamble. Children also queued up for instant caricature sketches.

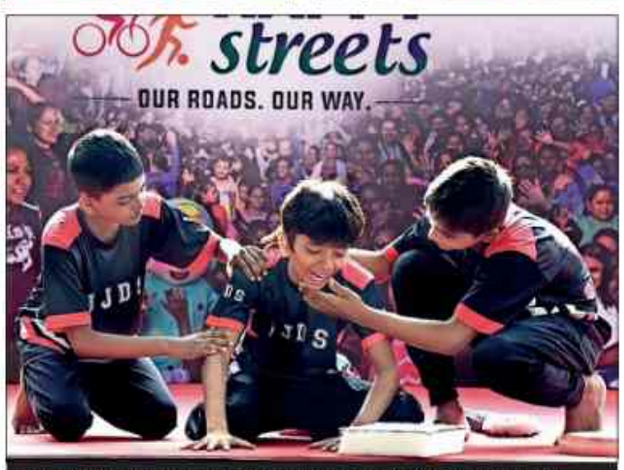
Sunil Koshy of From Mug to Mic performed Kannada songs from the 1990s and early 2000s, with several in the audience joining in.

Wellness and activity-based stalls added variety. NeeRav Arts demonstrated the use of mudgar, a traditional fitness tool, while Prashree Art hosted mandala art and sound healing sessions. NS Kumbar Art Academy promoted Chitrakar International Art Competition and Falun Dafa practitioners introduced their practice to visitors.

Quadz Fitness organised interactive challenges, including push-up contests, while young participants from Aryan Martial Arts showcased karate skills. Music and dance performances by Mic & Melody and World Music Conservatory, along with dance groups such as Jagan Jagz's Dance Studio, Twister Dance and Fitness Academy, Mac Studios and Trilochana Dance and Fitness Studio, continued through the morning.

Pics: Chethan Shivakumar





VERY LIVELY MORNING: Locals came together for a fun Sunday morning and participated in varied activities like dance, yoga, music and fitness events at Happy Streets in Nandini Layout

Patchy promises: East Bengaluru residents taken for a rough ride

Hamsaveni.N@timesofindia.com

Pics: TOI

The potholed and damaged internal roads of Munekolalu

Bengaluru: While civic focus in Bengaluru largely remains on arterial and sub-arterial roads, the most neglected stretches continue to be ward-level internal roads, despite their crucial role in last-mile connectivity.

A glaring example is Munekolalu in east Bengaluru, under Bengaluru East City Corporation, where several internal roads have been in a deplorable condition for nearly a year now. The roads were dug up for pipeline work within the layout, but were not restored.

Madusudhan Amar, a resident, told **TOI**, "We have been suffering for months as the roads are extremely bad. I can't take my car out because there are bumps on every single internal road. I have complained multiple times, but there has been no response."

Another resident, Priyavathsan Iyengar, pointed to the severe dust problem. "This is a crowded area with heavy vehicle movement, and the dust is unbearable. I cannot take my 11-month-old baby out as dust leads to infections," he said.

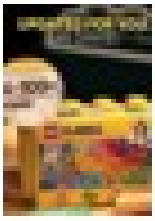
Munekolalu is a key locality connecting Outer Ring Road on one side and Old Airport Road and Varthur on the other. The area houses a large working population, including migrants and paying guests, making it densely populated. Despite this, residents allege it remains one of the most neglected pockets along Outer Ring Road, with poor road and drain maintenance.

The situation worsens during rain, when the area faces severe waterlogging due to inadequate drainage. Residents say sewage water often flows onto the roads, compounding the problem and making commuting both difficult and unhygienic.

Anand, a regular commuter on the stretch, said, "The ward roads in Munekolalu have multiple problems — potholes, frequent waterlogging, heavy traffic congestion and lack of proper footpaths. Dust from construction and broken roads is another major concern, along with poor street lighting."

An assistant executive engineer from East City Corporation said, "Ward roads came under our engineering team after formation of GBA. We now have funds as well. Currently, BWSSB is carrying out works in the area, and once that is completed, proper developmental works will be taken up. There is also a shortage of bitumen due to the ongoing war, which may delay asphalting works. However, we will ensure the roads are fixed before the monsoon."

LEGO revises age label for David Attenborough's 100th birthday



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Venice Biennale opens without Golden Lions after jury resignation

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How to: Build your own jazz vinyl collection

YOUR POV

How to submit your point of view to our POV

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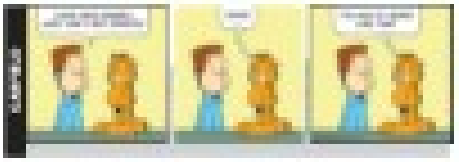
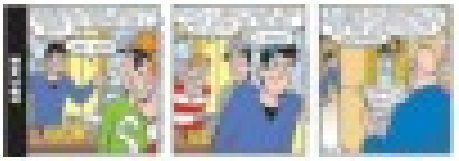
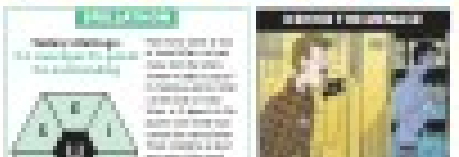
LEISURE







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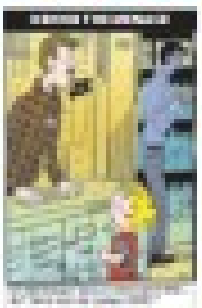

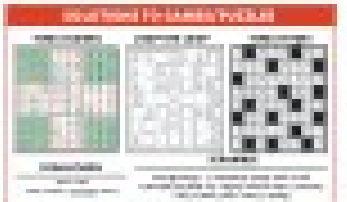

Climate engineers as new design thinkers and troubleshooters

With industries evolving to meet ecological challenges, the need for green skills will continue to rise, writes Vikranth Vedi

From bulletproof vests to fighter jets, materials science fuels Defence innovation

Be 'Hard to Replace' in a cybernetic ecosystem

Universities must build two-way partnerships with the industry

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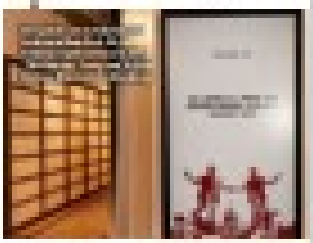

Linen Club ropes in Saif Ali Khan and Ibrahim Ali Khan as brand ambassadors

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Guarantees are lies; no governance, only fight for CM chair in Cong: PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday sharpened his attack on Congress' govt in Karnataka, accusing it of focusing more on a tussle for the chief minister post than governance and calling its flagship guarantees schemes "lies".

Addressing a gathering in Bengaluru, Modi said, "Congress is confused. governance does not exist in Congress's political dictionary."

Referring to a tussle between chief minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar, he said over the past three years, people of the state have seen a govt that spent most of its time dealing with internal fights instead of solving problems of people. "They are still undecided on how long the CM will remain or whether another will get a chance," he said.

He likened the current situation in Keralam, where Congress won a majority but has been unable to finalise a CM face, to the "Karnataka model of CM seat sharing". "Whether it is a two-and-half years sharing formula or one CM for each year, there is no clarity," he said.

TOI

CAST IN PRECIOUS METAL: State party president BY Vijayendra, opposition leader R Ashoka and other members of the Karnataka BJP unit presented Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a silver statue of himself during his visit to Bengaluru on Sunday

Party of betrayers

He called Congress a party of "betrayers" for refusing to support the women's reservation bill in Parliament. "Had the amendment been implemented immediately, Karnataka's representation in Parliament would have increased significantly, and many more women from Karnataka would have become MLAs and MPs. The women of this country will never forgive Congress," he said.

Considering the nation is moving forward with the resolve of a developed India, and Karnataka has a major role in this journey, Modi said ease of living and doing business were imperative. "The BJP govt is making every possible effort towards it," he said, after having warmly greeted former chief minister BS Yediyurappa, who sat beside him on stage.

Illegal Bangladeshis

Prior to the PM's arrival, R Ashoka, opposition leader in the legislative assembly, led a tirade against "illegal Bangladeshi immigrants", claiming that the state had a total of 10 lakh of them. The govt had previously denied the accusation and vigorously disputed the numbers.

"Bangladeshis should be driven out. They are indulging in dacoity," Ashok alleged. "Kogilu was filled with them and Congress wanted to give them land. BJP stopped it. There are already 10 Bangladeshi camps in Mahadevapura. Blue-collar workers have filled coffee estates and the city," he said.

BY Vijayendra, BJP state president, who welcomed the PM, also called for the uprooting of "anti-Hindu Congress" in Karnataka.

Modi, who noticed drawings of him in the crowd, asked kids to hand them over to Special Protection Group (SPG) personnel, assuring them that he would write letters to them in case their address was included.

Earlier, the state BJP unit felicitated Modi with a silver statue of himself.

DKS: NO CHAIR IS WOBBLING

In Lingsugur, Raichur district, deputy chief minister **DK Shivakumar** dismissed PM Modi's remarks, saying all "chairs in the state are stable". "There is no instability in Karnataka. I don't know what Prime Minister Narendra Modi is referring to," said Shivakumar, also state Congress president, in response to Modi's remarks on the political situation in Karnataka and Keralam.

Centre's nuke plant push hits land hurdles in Karnataka

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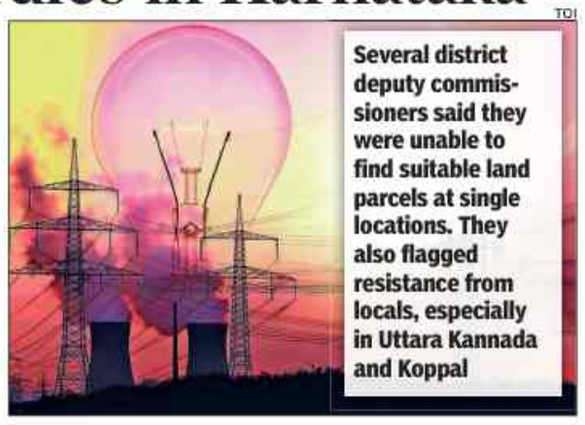

TOI

Several district deputy commissioners said they were unable to find suitable land parcels at single locations. They also flagged resistance from locals, especially in Uttara Kannada and Koppal

Bengaluru: Efforts by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) to establish a 6,000Mw nuclear power plant in Karnataka have hit a hurdle with the state govt facing significant challenges in identifying suitable locations for the project. Districts administrations have flagged local opposition and land availability concerns.

NTPC had pencilled in five locations — Mannur in Vijayapura, Bannikunta in Koppal, Besur in Shivamogga, Halkavatagi in Raichur, and Bhavikeri in Uttara Kannada — as part of its plan to strengthen India's energy infrastructure. Based on these recommendations, the state's revenue department then directed district deputy commissioners (DCs) to locate contiguous land parcels ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 acres to set up small modular reactors (SMRs), and to submit proposals for preliminary studies, including geological assessments and borehole drilling.

Officials say SMR projects require huge tracts of land: About 1,200 acres for a 2,000 Mw reactor going up to 2,000 acres for a 6,000Mw facility. An additional 100–150 acres would be needed for residential townships for staff.

However, during a review meeting chaired by the additional chief secretary (revenue) and additional chief secretary (energy), several DCs said they were unable to identify suitable land parcels at single locations. They also flagged resistance from local communities, especially in Uttara Kannada and Koppal districts.

Minutes of the meeting accessed by TOI show the Vijayapura DC noted that the 1,200 acres available at Mannur in Basavana Bagewadi taluk consists of fully irrigated fertile land and is located just 20km from Almatti reservoir. In Shivamogga, the DC pointed out that although 2,000 acres are available at Besur, 173 houses have already been constructed there under a rehabilitation programme, and several applications for land ownership rights are pending.

Koppal Bachao movement

Similar issues were highlighted in Koppal, where 1,490 acres identified at Bannikunta lie close to the Tungabhadra reservoir, but face opposition from the ongoing 'Koppal Bachao' movement against polluting industries. In Uttara Kannada, the DC reported that of the 1,021 acres at Bhavikeri, only 41 acres belong to the state, with the remainder allocated for rehabilitation linked to a port project. The site's proximity to both the Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant and the Indian Navy's Sea Bird naval base was also flagged as a sensitivity concern.

Hold consultations

Officials have now directed local administrations to revisit sites, hold consultations, and submit revised feasibility reports.

A KPCC engineer said, "The Centre planned to set up multiple 6,000Mw nuclear plans but given constraints, north Karnataka can only house 2,000Mw capacity plants."

But energy department officials say no formal proposal to set up nuclear power projects has been submitted as yet. They said that while diversification of energy mix remains a priority, identifying a viable site continues to be a major hurdle.

Sudhakar transcended caste, won hearts through devpt

Basavaraj Maralihalli | TNN

TOI

LOW PROFILE, BUT HUGE CLOUT: D Sudhakar with members of his family after he was sworn in as minister in May 2023

OBITUARY

D Sudhakar's career in politics was a rare example of trust built beyond caste arithmetic. At a time when electoral strength is often measured by community numbers, he, a Jain, created a durable political space in Chitradurga district through accessibility, development work and a visible concern for ordinary people.

Though he came from a business family and a numerical minority community, politics was not unfamiliar to him. His uncle, N Jayanna, served as a Congress MLA, and Sudhakar understood early the layered social realities of constituencies like Challakere, where Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes formed the decisive electorate.

In 2004, contesting from Challakere on a Congress ticket, he beat established rivals such as Tippeswamy and Basavaraj Mandimath to become MLA for the first time.

When constituency reorganisation turned Challakere into an ST-reserved seat, he shifted to Hiriyur in 2008. He was denied the Congress ticket, and his own community's vote base there was negligible. Yet he contested as an independent against strong candidates from influential communities.

What carried him through was not inherited caste strength but the credibility he had built through his work and his rapport with backward and marginalised sections.

That victory elevated him to state-level relevance. At a crucial moment, he joined four other independents in supporting the BJP govt led by BS Yediyurappa which was in minority after the elections. He was made social welfare minister, a role that reflected his long association with disadvantaged communities.

In 2013, he returned to Congress and contested from Hiriyur in a difficult election against senior functionary A Krishnappa of JD(S). Despite predictions that he lacked the caste backing needed to survive, Sudhakar won by 1,205 votes. He served as youth affairs minister in the Siddaramaiah govt.

His 2018 defeat to BJP's Poornima Krishnappa interrupted his rise but in 2023, he staged a decisive comeback, defeating both BJP and JD(S) rivals by 30,000 votes.

As planning and statistics minister, he was a significant presence and will be remembered as a people's politician who transcended caste lines.

PPP model for healthcare draws flak

Opposing the govt's decision to hand over govt hospitals to private medical colleges under the PPP model, CPM said it will hold a protest rally in Mangaluru Thursday. The party said protest will continue until the govt withdraws the order. Muneer Katipalla, Dakshina Kannada CPM secretary, said the decision would accelerate privatisation and commercia'-lisation of the sector, making healthcare inaccessible to middle and low-income families. It rejected the govt's claim that private institutions would offer better quality services. It said protests will be organised at hobli levels too. TNN

5% reservation in housing a welcome step: PwDs

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Bengaluru: Members of the community have welcomed the govt's recent order mandating 5% reservation for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in housing schemes, calling it a significant step toward inclusivity, while stressing the need for effective implementation and broader reforms.

Besides housing, the order issued last month, provides reservation in allotment of agricultural land, poverty alleviation programmes, development initiatives and land at concessional rates for businesses, enterprises, and recreation centres. It also promises priority for women with benchmark disabilities.

Members of the community said that while the decision addresses a long-standing concern around housing insecurity, several demands and policy gaps remain.

TOI

MASSIVE STRIDES: Chief minister Siddaramaiah addresses reporters in Bengaluru on Sunday

S Sudha, a technician, said: "As a woman with a disability, I feel deeply encouraged by this progressive step. It affirms that our dignity and aspirations matter. This order gives us hope that inclusion will be a lived reality, not just a promise."

Others too highlighted the financial and social impact such support could have. Anusha, a teacher at Shradhanjali Integrated School and a para shuttler, said home ownership has often remained inaccessible for many PwDs. "Access to govt-backed support such as loans, will help people not just build homes but also create livelihoods," she said.

However, she cautioned accessibility in implementation would determine the success of the initiative. "Many people struggle with navigating procedures and documentation, and that can sometimes discourage them. If implementation is smooth, this initiative can truly reach those who need it most," she said.

Quota in MSME scheme too

The govt passed a separate order last month, mandating reservation in land allocation of industrial areas as well. Of the 30% of Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) land reserved for MSME industries, 5% will be reserved for entrepreneurs with disabilities. KIADB has already implemented a scheme providing concessions for SC/ST entrepreneurs and 5% internal reservation will be provided to those with disabilities.

Accessibility is key

Advocates working in the disability sector underlined the importance of integrating accessibility standards into housing infrastructure. Ashmira Hamirani, senior coordinator at Association of People with Disability (APD), said, "The 5% reservation is an encouraging move, and not something we see often. However, I'm keen to see how accessibility is integrated into housing itself as the impact could be limited otherwise."

Experts said while access to higher education and employment opportunities for PwDs continues to evolve, policies must increasingly move beyond welfare-based approaches and focus on long-term inclusion, accessibility, and economic empowerment.

Beyond BJP & Cong: Small parties aim big in GBA polls

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

TOI

File pic of Aam Aadmi Party members campaigning for civic polls in Bengaluru

Another emerging player, Karnataka Rashtra Samithi, said it has so far finalised 47 candidates through an internal selection process and hopes to field nominees in as many wards as possible

Bengaluru: The city's long-delayed civic polls may still lack a date, but newer political parties are already fanning out, betting that frustration over potholes, waste and poor infrastructure could translate into votes.

With the State Election Commission indicating it is prepared to conduct elections for the five city corporations under Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), smaller and emerging parties are stepping up public outreach, identifying candidates and building ward-level networks.

Bengaluru Navanirmana Party (BNP) plans to contest around 100 wards and says it is targeting at least 50 wins. Party founder and general secretary Srikanth Narasimhan said the party will field candidates across Bengaluru, though its presence remains stronger in the east and south.

"This is because our base of volunteers and functionaries are from the region. However, we are also seeing new members joining from other parts," he said.

Narasimhan said the party's structure encourages workers to stay involved at grassroots instead of pursuing poll posts. "In other parties, there are people who can win but are made to work. In BNP, it is the other way round," he said.

Addressing questions over actor Sudha Belawadi being fielded from Kengal Hanumanthaiah ward in JP Nagar, Narasimhan rejected suggestions of celebrity-driven politics. "She has been actively raising local issues. She is contesting not because she is a celebrity, but because she is the right candidate," he said.

Aam Aadmi Party, meanwhile, says it is seeing stronger traction in the west and central parts of the city. The party has received 125-130 applications from aspirants.

Naveen Iyer, an aspirant from Rajajinagar, said the party is positioning itself as a clean-governance alternative to BJP and Congress. "Successive Congress and BJP govts have been indulging in corruption. AAP aims to change the system by giving opportunities to educated candidates, youngsters and women," he said.

Iyer added that party workers have been helping residents address civic grievances through platforms such as BBMP (now GBA) Sahaaya app as well as by assisting citizens in navigating several civic systems.

"Irrespective of when the elections will be held, we are already working on civic issues. Bengaluru is being trolled globally; we want to restore its reputation as a Garden City by making each ward a model ward," he said.

Another emerging player, Karnataka Rashtra Samithi, said it has so far finalised 47 candidates through an internal selection process and hopes to field nominees in as many wards as possible.

State president Deepak CN said the party is focusing on transparency, public participation and local governance.

"The city continues to struggle with basic issues such as waste management. With people's participation, better roads and infrastructure can be achieved through corruption-free governance," he said.

Deepak added that the party had received a stronger response from Kannadiga-dominated pockets, particularly in south and west Bengaluru, in line with its emphasis on preserving Kannada cultural identity.

Compensation sought for leopard victim's kin

▶ Continued from page 1

TRAGEDY @ MM HILLS

Even though the boy's parents and other devotees attempted to rescue Harshith, the leopard dragged him into thick jungles.

Upon receiving information, forest department officials rushed to the spot and recovered the body of the deceased 200 metres from the site of attack.

Activist Ponnachi Raju, who arrived at the spot, condemned the failure of forest department personnel in preventing such attacks.

He alleged that the forest department distributed the entry ticket for Nagamale padayatra at 6am instead of 7am. He demanded compensation to the victim's family and safety measures to protect padayatra devotees.

As three goats were killed in a similar attack at Indiganatha village, located along Nagamale stretch, Saturday night, locals suspect it to be the same leopard .

₹604-cr proposal to develop Kukke Subrahmanya Temple

Mangaluru: The cabinet recently approved a comprehensive master plan for the development of Kukke Subrahmanya Temple **(in pic)** at an estimated cost of Rs 604.6 crore.

The approval was granted during a cabinet meeting chaired by CM Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru, according to Temple Management Committee president Harish Injadi.

He said the project includes around 19 major works aimed at improving infrastructure and facilities for devotees and temple staff. The temple has funds, but needs govt approval to undertake works. As part of the project, Rs 32 crore has been allocated for the construction of 'Suttu Pauli'. Three new yajna shala blocks for devotees performing Sarpa Samskara rituals will be constructed for Rs 5 crore, Rs 5.5 crore and Rs 5.9 crore, respectively. The plan also includes the construction of accommodation facilities at Injadi. TNN

TOI

Man said he had to support mother too

▶ Continued from page 1

MAINTENANCE CASE

The husband contended that the family court had earlier allowed his petition seeking restitution of conjugal rights and directed the wife to resume cohabitation, but she failed to comply.

The husband then submitted that he had to support his elderly mother too with his monthly salary of Rs 45,258.

The court observed: "If the husband was genuinely interested in resuming cohabitation, he ought to have taken steps to execute the decree. His failure to do so indicates the decree was used merely as a defence to avoid maintenance."

Observing that maintenance is a statutory and continuing obligation of the husband towards his wife and kids, the court modified the amount awarded by family court.

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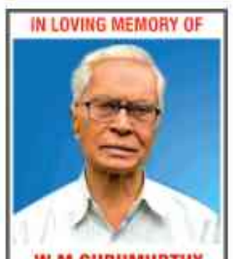

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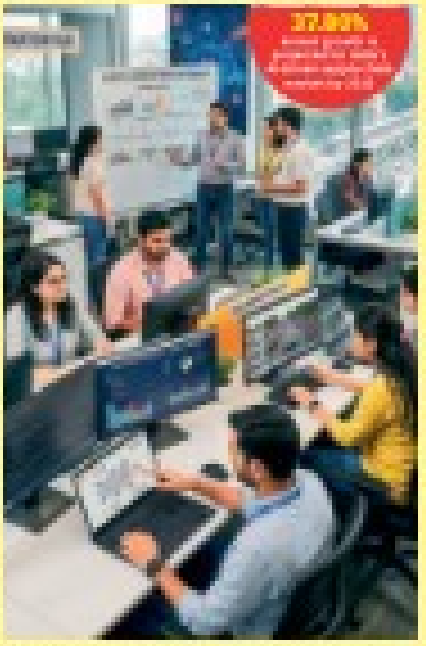
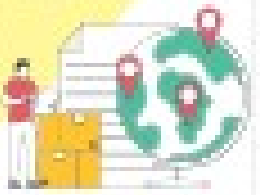
Learning the art of explaining as a career skill

AI will not replace supply chain jobs, but will transform them into data-centric roles

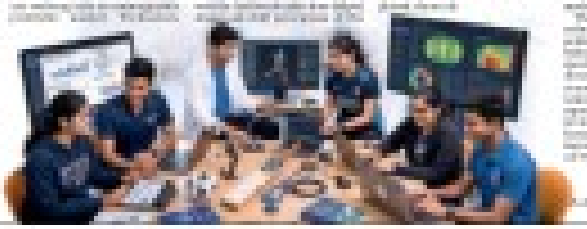
As the logistics sector embraces predictive technologies, professionals blending domain expertise with analytical fluency stand to inherit the decade's biggest career boom, writes Rohit Thakur





Tech-driven overhaul to transform evaluation models

Sports boom powers avenues in management and science



PM: Meditation, mindfulness key to building Viksit Bharat

Vindhya.Pabolu
@timesofindia.com

Pics: TOI

STALWARTS MEET: PM Narendra Modi with Sri Sri Ravishankar at an Art of Living programme in Bengaluru Sunday. (R) Audience at the event

> Our Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is not merely a govt programme. It has become a natural part of people's lives. When society becomes active, the greatest challenges find collective solutions
> **Narendra Modi** | PRIME MINISTER

Bengaluru: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Sunday that meditation and mindfulness were "extremely valuable" for nation-building, asserting that a developed India will be built by "youngsters who are mentally calm, socially responsible and sensitive towards society".

He was addressing devotees at the 45th anniversary of The Art of Living Foundation after inaugurating Dhyan Mandir on the organisation's Kanakapura Road campus.

The PM said the nation's future depended on a generation that could look inward as much as outward. "Today's youngsters, through technology, are connected with each other. The building of a Viksit Bharat will be led by youngsters who are mentally calm, socially responsible and sensitive towards society. This is why meditation and mindfulness are extremely valuable. It strengthens the sense of collective responsibility. Such initiatives also give people the opportunity to know and understand themselves better," he added.

Referring to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Modi said public participation has transformed the cleanliness campaign beyond a govt programme.

On Bengaluru, he said the city, while globally recognised for software and services, also remains deeply rooted in India's cultural traditions and values.

He urged the organisation to help connect farmers with natural farming practices. "Today, even in matters of health, people are turning towards the natural. Saving our land from chemicals is also a duty," Modi said.

He called for greater awareness on water conservation. "Through various platforms, farmers should be guided on better water management. Saving every drop is essential. This is the right time, as the monsoon approaches, to create widespread awareness about water conservation."

The PM also appealed to people to save electricity, avoid single-use plastic and promote local products. He said the country is focusing on Mission LiFE, a movement encouraging environmentally responsible lifestyles.

Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar recalled the early years of the organisation and said its foundation reflected diverse viewpoints coming together. He noted that former Chief Justice of India Justice PN Bhagwati and Justice VR Krishna Iyer were among the first trustees of the organisation. "Despite many challenges, this institution kept moving forward," he said.

Govt may name water project after Sudhakar

▸ Continued from page 1

Sudhakar, who kept a low profile, became a minister in his first term in the govt helmed by BS Yediyurappa in 2008 when the Hiriyur MLA won as an independent and supported the BJP-led government.

He then switched to Congress and won in 2013 and 2023 when he was given a ministerial berth despite having no caste backing. Sudhakar was a Jain.

CM Siddaramaiah visited Sudhakar's residence in Bengaluru Sunday morning and expressed condolence with the family.

"He was a popular leader and had worked earlier as a social welfare minister in 2008. He was director of Apex Bank and contributed to the cooperation sector. His loss is a big blow," he said.

Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar recalled Sudhakar's active participation during Bharat Jodo yatra and said the government will consider naming Upper Bhadra irrigation project after him.

Anxiety mounts as clogged drains pose flood threat again

Sanjay.Murty@timesofindia.com

TOI

UGLY SIGHT: A stormwater drain at HBR Layout

Bengaluru: With monsoon approaching, anxiety is once again mounting among residents of HBR Layout and surrounding areas such as Sai Layout near Hennur-Bagalur Road, long known for recurring flooding after heavy rain. Despite visits by CM Siddaramaiah and DCM DK Shivakumar following last year's inundation, residents of the north-east Bengaluru locality say little has changed on the ground.

Many households continue to bear the financial and emotional burden of repeated flooding. "I spent over Rs 20,000 last year repairing my car twice. Water entered our home on May 18, damaging appliances like our refrigerator. Given the slow pace of work, we expect the same situation this year," said Ravi R, a resident of HBR Layout 5th Block.

The situation is particularly distressing for families with elderly and ailing members, residents noted, adding that the problem has persisted since 2017 without lasting solutions.

A key concern remains poor maintenance of the rajakaluve (stormwater drain). While a 400-metre stretch from Outer Ring Road up to HBR Layout 19th Main is better maintained, the nearly 2-km stretch leading to the railway crossing at Geddalahalli is choked with garbage and debris. This section, especially the bottleneck near the railway line, has been identified as the primary cause of overflow, leading to flooding in Sai Layout and upstream areas of HBR Layout.

Residents also flagged administrative issues. The drain falls under the jurisdiction of two city corporation zones and overlaps two assembly constituencies — Sarvagnanagar and KR Pura — leading to coordination gaps. "There is a lack of coordination in addressing civic issues," said resident V Pichandi.

Desilting in 10 days: North corpn

Bengaluru North City Corporation commissioner Pommala Sunil Kumar assured that desilting of the remaining stretch of the stormwater drain will be completed soon. "We are actively getting the rajakaluves desilted and paying contractors only after receiving drone images," he said. Kumar added that wide drains towards Geddalahalli need long-boom excavators for desilting and that the same will be arranged soon.

Modi says governance collapsing under Cong

▸ Continued from page 1

He recounted the Tamil Nadu saga as the power-hungry Congress's betrayal of DMK. "DMK stood with Congress for decades and repeatedly rescued Congress during crises. The UPA government survived because of DMK's support. But the moment political equations shifted, power-hungry Congress stabbed DMK in the back."

"Now, Congress is searching for another party to ride on as a parasite," he said, referencing Tamil Nadu.

In Kerala, the PM said, Congress, despite securing a majority, is still unable to decide on ministers: Should they use the 2.5-year formula or the one-year-per-CM formula. "A solution is still not at hand," he added.

Modi attacked Congress for collapse in governance. "In Himachal Pradesh, Congress-led govt has not been able to pay salaries. In Telangana, farmers are being driven to suicide. In Karnataka, governance has taken a back seat due to internal conflict," he said.

On the recently concluded assembly elections in five states, Modi said, "One standout message was: Indians are offering the mantra of stability even in times of global uncertainty."

Gelatin sticks near Modi route spark scare

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A security scare unfolded on the outskirts of the city Sunday morning, hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled along Kanakapura Road to visit the Art of Living Foundation campus.

Two gelatin sticks were found near Kuppareddy Kere, close to Thathaguni Estate on the route used by the PM's convoy, prompting an immediate response from security and anti-sabotage teams already deployed for the high-profile visit.

Police said the explosives were discovered roughly 20-25 feet away from the main road near a compound wall on National Highway 948, about 2km from the AOL campus.

The discovery came around one-and-a-half hours before Modi's convoy was scheduled to pass.

The packet containing the gelatin sticks was noticed by a police constable deployed on special duty. Officials said the constable found a suspicious cover lying near the roadside and, upon checking it, discovered the explosives before immediately alerting senior officers.

Anti-sabotage teams rushed to the spot and seized the gelatin sticks. A case has been registered under the Explosives Act at Kaggalipura police station.

DIG (central) S Girish said special teams were formed to investigate the incident and trace those responsible for leaving the explosives near the convoy route.

Police officers said there was no immediate danger of an explosion because no detonator was found along with the gelatin sticks. Investigators are examining whether the material was intentionally placed to create panic or draw attention.

Bengaluru South superintendent of police R Srinivas Gowda said the packet was found a kilometre from NICE Road junction between 9.45am and 10am.

Ex-IT employee held for hoax call

Even as police teams investigated the gelatin sticks, another security concern emerged on the day when Bengaluru city police received a threat call claiming explosions would be carried out at HAL Airport and the AOI campus.

Police later detained a 42-year-old man identified as Lohith in connection with the hoax call. Lohith, a resident of Koramangala 8th Block and a former IT employee who is currently unemployed, was apprehended at a bus stand on Bannerghatta Road by a joint team of Koramangala and Suddaguntepalya police.

Officials said the threat call was made around 7.30am to the police control room and Lohith also sent a WhatApp message. The information was immediately relayed to local police stations, triggering a rapid search operation.

A senior police officer said preliminary inquiry suggested Lohith may be mentally disturbed. However, investigators believe he has no connection to the gelatin sticks found near the convoy route. A case has been registered at Koramangala police station. TNN

SPOTLIGHT

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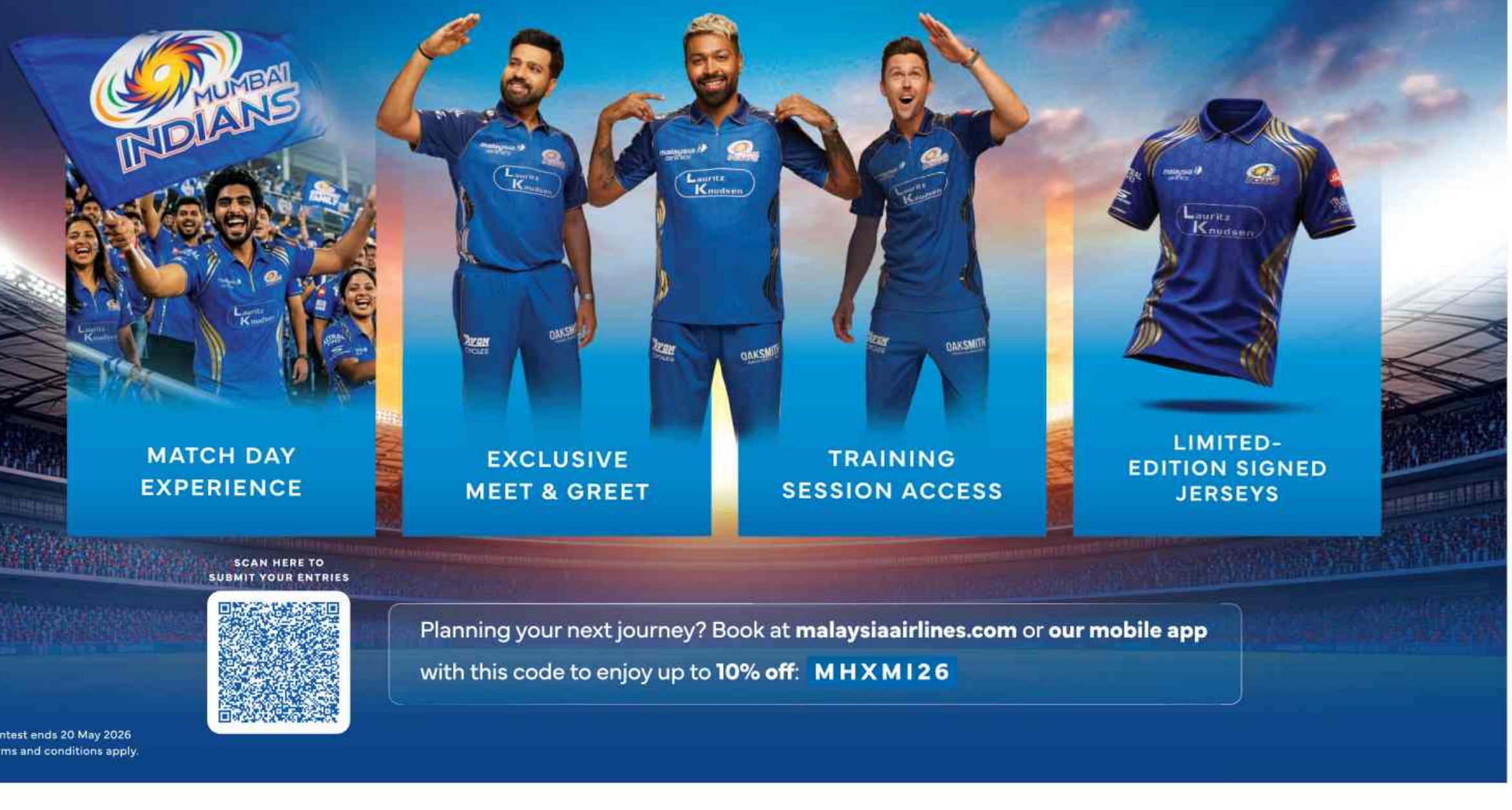

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International Mother's Day

"Caring for her is the most meaningful way to celebrate her"

Impact on Fertility

Endometriosis can affect fertility by causing inflammation and damage to reproductive organs. While not all women with this condition face infertility, delayed diagnosis may reduce future options. Women planning pregnancy or experiencing difficulty conceiving should consider evaluation if symptoms are present. Early diagnosis and management can help preserve reproductive function and improve outcomes. Addressing symptoms at the right time allows better planning and reduces long-term complications related to reproductive health.

You Care for Everyone Let Us Care for You

As a mother, your focus is always on your child and family. You manage responsibilities, routines, and emotions every single day. But in doing so, many women overlook their own health concerns. Persistent pain, heavy bleeding, or unexplained fatigue are not always temporary. These could be signs of underlying issues. This Mother's Day, I want to remind you that your health matters just as much as your family's. Don't ignore symptoms—seek medical advice. Taking a step toward diagnosis and treatment is not selfish—it is responsible. Because when you are healthy and stable,

Why Early Diagnosis Matters

Endometriosis is often diagnosed late because many women normalize their symptoms. Delayed diagnosis can lead to worsening pain, reduced fertility options, and poorer long-term outcomes. Early recognition helps women access appropriate treatment sooner and make informed decisions about their health. Persistent pelvic pain, heavy periods, or pain during intercourse should not be ignored. Timely evaluation can prevent disease progression and improve quality of life. Awareness is the first step toward better care and better outcomes.

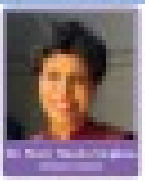
Don't Ignore Chronic Pelvic Pain

Chronic pelvic pain is often dismissed as minor discomfort, but it may indicate underlying issues. Pain that persists beyond menstrual cycles or affects daily functioning should be evaluated. Ignoring symptoms can lead to worsening discomfort and reduced quality of life over time. Early medical attention helps identify the cause and initiate appropriate treatment. Managing symptoms effectively not only improves physical health but also supports emotional well-being and day-to-day productivity.

Your Health Is Your Child's Foundation

Your child depends on you not just emotionally and physically, but also financially and responsibly. Skipping routine medical care because you're busy or assuming you're "fine" can put your long-term stability at risk. Regular check-ups help detect issues early, when they're easier and more affordable to manage. Taking care of your health is not a luxury—it's a necessary investment in your family's future. Make time for yourself, because your family needs you at your best.

Fatigue Linked to Fibroids



Persistent tiredness may not always be due to a busy lifestyle. Uterine fibroids can cause heavy bleeding, leading to iron deficiency and ongoing fatigue. Women may feel weak, dizzy, or unable to maintain daily energy levels. Recognizing this link is important for early intervention. Treating fibroids can help restore energy, improve overall health, and prevent complications like anemia that can further reduce quality of life.

Heavy Periods Are Not Normal

Heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding is often ignored, but it may indicate Uterine Fibroids. These non-cancerous growths can lead to excessive bleeding, pelvic discomfort, and fatigue. Women experiencing frequent pad changes, passing clots, or feeling weak during periods should seek medical evaluation. With proper treatment, fibroids can be managed effectively, helping restore energy levels and improve daily life. Early diagnosis through ultrasound allows timely management, helping reduce complications and improve overall health and comfort.

Understanding Fibroids

Uterine Fibroids are common growths that develop in the uterus, often in its strong reproductive walls. Many women may not notice symptoms, while others experience heavy periods, pelvic pressure, or frequent urination. The impact depends on their size and location. Although fibroids are non-cancerous, they can affect quality of life if ignored. Early detection helps in monitoring and managing symptoms effectively, avoiding unnecessary complications.

Not All Period Pain Is Normal

There is a common belief that all periods are extremely painful to the point they affect daily routine and cannot be improved. But certain painful changes your daily routine even worse. Many feel pressured to function normally, or attending faculty as productive, or responsible to investigate studies. Endometriosis, which provides further into the pain associated this point. This Mother's Day, take a moment to evaluate what you've been normalizing. Your body is sending signals, and they should not be ignored. Early diagnosis can help you avoid years of unnecessary pain and improve your daily life.

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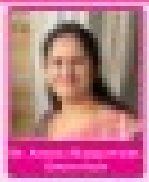
Early Attention Makes a Difference

Many women experience symptoms of endometriosis for years before receiving a diagnosis. Common signs like painful periods, pelvic pain, heavy bleeding, and fertility challenges can significantly affect daily life and long-term health. Delayed diagnosis can lead to worsening symptoms and reduced treatment options. Early detection helps in managing symptoms effectively, preserving fertility, and improving overall well-being. Awareness and timely action can make a meaningful difference in a woman's health journey.

Constant Tiredness Isn't Just Motherhood



Feeling tired as a mother is expected, but extreme fatigue is not something to dismiss. Fibroids can cause heavy bleeding, which can lead to iron deficiency and persistent weakness. If your bed doesn't seem to help, it's worth evaluating. This Mother's Day, don't ignore your body's signals. Seek medical advice and get the support you need. Managing fibroids can significantly improve your energy levels. Taking care of your health is not an extra task—it is essential to maintaining your daily life and responsibilities.

For You and Your Future

As a young woman, you may also be dealing with something you haven't yet put a name to. Endometriosis can sometimes affect fertility by impacting reproductive health in multiple ways. That's why early attention is important. Ignoring pain during your teens and 20s can lead to more complications later. This Mother's Day, please don't dismiss persistent pelvic pain as "normal." Your body is trying to tell you something. Listen to it. Seek medical advice, get the support you need, and take control of your health and future choices. If you're also experiencing ongoing pelvic pain or discomfort, don't delay evaluation. Knowing what's happening inside gives you the power to make informed decisions for your future.

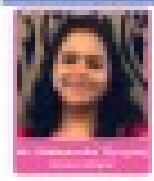
"Being Strong Doesn't Mean Ignoring Pain"

In many cultures, women are taught from childhood that enduring pain is a sign of strength. We're told to "be strong," "don't complain," and "think about your family first." While these values can be admirable in many ways, they can also be dangerous when they prevent us from seeking help for our own health. Endometriosis is a perfect example of how this mindset can cause harm. It can take years for many women to receive a diagnosis, often because their pain is dismissed as "normal" or "just bad periods." But pain is not normal, and it is not something you should have to endure in silence.

Persistent Fatigue Isn't Normal

Persistent tiredness that does not improve with ordinary methods from Deficiency Anemia. This condition occurs when the body lacks sufficient iron to produce hemoglobin, reducing oxygen supply to tissues. Women may experience weakness, dizziness, and reduced stamina. Many ignore these symptoms, assuming they are part of daily stress. A simple blood test can confirm the diagnosis. Early treatment with supplements and dietary changes can restore energy levels and improve daily functioning.

"Your Pain Matters, Especially Today"



This Mother's Day, I want every woman who has been told that her pain is "normal" to pause and listen to me carefully. It is not normal to bleed through multiple pads every hour. It is not normal to miss days of work or school every month because of cramps. It is not normal to feel exhausted, anemic, or emotionally drained because your body is fighting against you. And it is not normal to be told to "push through it" when your quality of life is suffering.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026

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The ordinariness of milk hides its extraordinariness. This is a food that the body produces on its own exactly when it is needed and then withdraws it as the need subsides. Unlike other food, which needs to be found, foraged, hunted, grown and then cooked, milk just appears. A biological tap comes on and shuts off. The food is complete for the purpose for which it exists. Nature ensures that the most fragile stage of life is not left to chance.

Milk contains everything the baby needs— all the nutrients that are essential for development. Which is why the same food can be given for months on end, without supplementation or variation. This is design at its most exquisite. Exactly what is needed at the exact right time, in just the right proportion.

Think of it as instinct in liquid form. It is the truth of the most direct, most self-evident kind. It is the one thing human beings don't have to work for, extract or plumb nature for. In a sense, milk is the wellspring of nature in the human body, a transient mechanism installed in the human body, a sign that we are nature, not just its consumers.

The way milk is served underlines the role that it plays. The child snuggles up to the mother, feeling her breathing, and retrieving the connection that existed in the womb. It comes with touch, with warmth, with the comforting thud of a heartbeat. Hunger is satisfied, yes, but so too is fear, loneliness, and the need to belong, even if momentarily, to a whole. A baby drinking milk is not simply ingesting nutrition but learning, wordlessly, that the world is a place that can be trusted. Breast milk is a way in which the umbilical cord is never quite snapped, where the mother and child continue to be part of an unbroken chain. It is only after months that the child is gently let go, set adrift in the long journey to individual selfhood.

This is why it is so deeply rooted in culture. It is considered presumptively good, a symbol of everything honest and pure. In India, milk is auspicious, offered to gods, poured over idols, and part of the prasad. It is woven into ritual and myth: the child Krishna stealing butter, Shiva bathed in milk, weddings beginning with a spoon of dahi.

Human beings steal it from the lips of calves to continue their love affair with milk. They continue to drink it long after biology has stopped asking for it, not because their bodies need it, but because they answer more primary needs. To drink milk is to sip at the past, slip into the comforting arms of an infancy that never left us, to bask in the nostalgia of a time where the world came to us with care, without needing any effort from our side. It is only recently that there have been questions about the need for adults to drink milk, but these reside largely at the periphery of our consciousness.

Think of it as instinct in liquid form. It is the truth of the most direct, most self-evident kind. It is the one thing human beings don't have to work for, extract or plumb nature for. In a sense, milk is the wellspring of nature in the human body, a transient mechanism installed in the human body, a sign that we are nature, not just its consumers

The adult attachment to milk has a touch of the comic about it. The adult with a nightly glass of milk is, in a sense, still attached to the apron strings of childhood. We may dress it up as health, calcium, bone strength, but perhaps at heart, it is nostalgia for the nursery. Milk is the most respectable form of regression into a world of innocence.

Then there is our obsession with dairy foods, sites of rebirth for milk. Butter, yoghurt, cheese, ghee, khoya— each is a way of stretching its life beyond infancy, each carrying its own meanings. Butter slathered on toast is that point on the horizon where life melts into pleasure. Ghee is plump sacredness, both lush and auspicious. Cheese adds extravagance and a touch of the exotic to food. It is a mark of abundance that is generously heaped upon food to make it more than what it already is. Yoghurt, or curd, is India's daily staple, tied to digestion, coolness, and auspicious beginnings. If milk is instinct, dairy is invention.

And always, it is an absolute standard. For truth. Doodh ka doodh, paani ka paani— milk as essence, water as dilution. To separate them is to see things as they are. To separate artifice from what is real. To call something 'doodh se dhula (washed in milk) is to call it pure, innocent, beyond question.

Once outside the body, milk 'spoils'. In its transience, it tells us that truth has a time and place; it cannot be stockpiled. Its commodification is a tribute to human ingenuity, but by itself, it is clear that it does not exist to be stored. Its preciousness is designed for a certain specific use, an idea human beings have chosen to disregard.

So we refuse to let go. Milk is exploited in every conceivable way possible— it is powdered, condensed, sweetened, turned into kheer, shrikhand, custard and ice cream. We turn into many forms of indulgence, luxuriating in its creamy goodness. The body may no longer need it, but human imagination cannot do without it.

In the end, the idea of milk is larger than nutrition. It is the body's first philosophy, the most perfect way of saying what care feels like. It embodies the principle that at least once in life, survival comes without struggle. To drink milk is to be reminded of the only time when the world met our needs before we even knew how to ask.

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Eye on 2027, BJP expands Yogi ministry with an OBC-Dalit tilt

Rajiv.Srivastava1
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Lucknow: BJP sharpened Sunday its caste calculus before 2027 assembly elections in UP, expanding CM Yogi Adityanath's ministry with a heavy tilt towards OBCs and Dalits to counter Samajwadi Party's PDA — backwards, Dalits and minorities — mobilisation strategy.

Six new ministers took oath, including three OBC faces and two Dalits, while two backward-caste junior ministers were promoted.

Lone upper-caste entrant was SP rebel MLA Manoj Pandey, a Brahmin who cross-voted for BJP in Rajya Sabha elections last year.

Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath to former UP BJP chief Bhupendra Chaudhary and Pandey as cabinet ministers, and to Kailash Rajput, Hansraj Vishwakarma, Krishna Paswan and Surendra Diler as ministers of state.

Raj SOG probes NEET '26 after 100 questions allegedly match test paper

Dishank Purohit & Hemali Chhapias | TNN

Jaipur/Mumbai: Rajasthan Police's Special Operations Group (SOG) has begun probing alleged malpractices in NEET (UG) 2026 after the National Testing Agency (NTA) received inputs from Rajasthan and Uttarakhand regarding question sets circulated before the May 3 exam that allegedly overlapped with the actual paper.

Additional DGP (SOG) Vishal Bansal said investigators found a set of over 400 questions circulated days before the exam, with more than 100 biology and chemistry questions showing "striking similarities" to those asked in NEET. Bansal described it as a "guess paper" or test series, but sources said a deeper nexus has not been ruled out, citing searches and questioning across several Rajasthan cities and in Dehradun.

Similar videos and copies of test-series question papers were also shared on social media from a coaching academy in Latur, Maharashtra. Amol Tambe, superintendent of police, Latur, told TOI police they have not yet started any investigation.

TESTING TIMES

In a press release on Saturday, NTA said the May 3 exam was conducted under a "full security protocol" and proceeded normally across centres. It said suspicious inputs were received late on May 7 and were escalated to central agencies the next morning for "independent verification and necessary action".

Without referring to detentions or raids, NTA said it was "cooperating fully with investigators" and sharing exam-related data and technical inputs. "The examination process itself proceeded as planned across all centres on the day," the NTA statement said.

NTA also said the "effort and integrity of the very large majority of bona fide aspirants is not in question, and will not be devalued". It said any further decision would be taken after investigating agencies submit findings to the Ministry of Education.

Sources said the matter remains under verification and no formal FIR has been registered yet. "Around 100-odd questions related to chemistry and biology appear to have matched the NEET paper," an official said.

SOG teams have conducted searches and field inquiries in multiple locations, including Sikar, Rajasthan's coaching hub, officials said. A coaching institute owner in Sikar is under the scanner and has been questioned, and some suspects may be brought to Jaipur.

2 Indians safe after hantavirus scare, says govt

New Delhi: Two Indian crew members aboard the Dutch-flagged cruise vessel MV Hondius are healthy and asymptomatic after a hantavirus scare led the ship to anchor off Spain's Canary Islands, the Indian embassy in Madrid said Sunday, reports **Anuja Jaiswal**.

The vessel, carrying around 150 people, arrived in Spain amid international health monitoring linked to a reported outbreak onboard. Passengers were allowed to disembark following protocols laid down by WHO and Spanish authorities. The embassy said the two Indians, who were crew members on the ship, have been evacuated to the Netherlands for quarantine and health checks.

Applications were invited from govt, private sector candidates

▶ Continued from page 1

Since incorporation in March 2019, NSIL has been headed by Isro insiders — Suma Devaki Ram, G Narayanan, Radhakrishnan Durairaj and M Mohan — either on deputation or formal appointment. NSIL's predecessor, Antrix Corporation, DoS' first commercial arm established in Sept 1992, has also always had DoS insiders heading it. Antrix is now nearly defunct.

The DoS had, through a vacancy circular issued on Aug 11, 2025, invited applications for the NSIL CMD post. As per the document reviewed by TOI, it had set Sept 11, 2025 as the last date for submission of applications.

The eligibility conditions were explicitly open for recruitment from the private sector as well. The circular said applications were invited from candidates working in the central govt, including the armed forces and All India Services, CPSEs, State PSUs and private sector companies.

"The search-cum-selection committee has shortlisted at least five persons for the positions, including a few DoS insiders. A final decision and order on the appointment is yet to be formalised," one source said. This is not the first time DoS is trying to get a private industry person to head NSIL. In Jan 2022, DoS, for the first time, opened up the CMD's post to those from the private sector. The selection committee was empowered to include names of people who don't apply and relax eligibility criteria to accommodate candidates it feels stand out for the position. Then NSIL CMD Radhakrishnan D, who was operating as an interim head, was eligible to apply and the committee eventually picked him for the post. The NSIL CMD's position has remained vacant since March-end after M Mohan superannuated.

If the veteran is appointed, he will be the first from the private sector to head an operational wing of the DoS that is directly involved in space-related operations.

Bombay HC stays demolition of 2 Muslim shrines in Maharashtra

Kolhapur: Bombay HC's Kolhapur bench has granted an interim injunction restraining the Panhala Giristhan Nagar Parishad from demolishing two 15th-century Muslim shrines, Hazrat Peer Shahbuddin Khatavali Dargah and Hazrat Peer Sadhu Khatal Dargah, at Panhala, reports **Abhijeet Patil**.

Based on a complaint filed on July 1, 2024, by a local resident before the tehsildar, the Panhala hill station civic body had issued a notice under Sections 52 and 53 (both related to unauthorized development and power to demolish the same) of the Maharashtra Regional Town Planning Act to the trust that manages these dargahs. Earlier this year, the dargah trust initiated proceedings before the Superintendent of Land Records (SLR) to assert the legitimacy of its possession and occupation of the property.

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NAME Change I Kiran P R residing at 135, 22nd A Cross, Judicial Layout, GKVK Post, Bangalore – 560065. I have changed my daughter's name from Cherisya K Reddy to Charithra K Reddy vide affidavit dt: 30/03/2026 sworn before notary K V Nanjaiah, Bangalore.

I, formerly known as ABHIRAJ DHANRAJ PILLE, have changed my name to ABHIRAJ D. Father's name corrected from PILLE DHANRAJ BABURAO to DHANRAJ. Mother's name corrected from PILLE RANI DHANRAJ to RANI SHIVAJIRAO DONGARE. Both old and new names belong to the same persons.

I, JAMI CHANDINI, W/o [VENKATESH TANGUDU], aged 30 years, residing at [#205, Block-B, Sapthagiri Sannidhi, Laxminarayan Temple Road, Papaiah Reddy Layout, Munnekolal, Banaglore-560037], hereby declare that I have changed my name from JAMI CHANDINI to TANGUDU CHANDINI. From now onwards, I shall be known as TANGUDU CHANDINI for all purposes, including official records, passport, and legal documents

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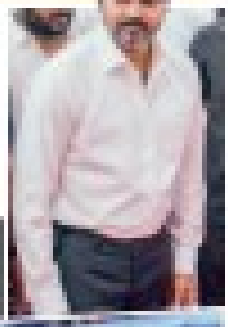
It is by acts and not by ideas that people live — Anatole France

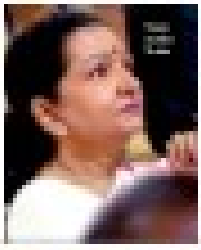
Politics, pop culture and peak Vijay energy

Vijay's front-row appearance sets social media ablaze

The Vijayas' outing

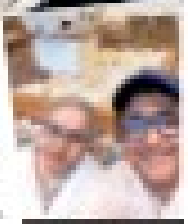


A perfect Mother's Day gift



'A mother is a mother, no matter the age'

Rosé Gurpreet's multilingual solo is a mom's anthem for the ages



According to you, what's something new with regard to stepping in diapers, and fast very for lovers

UP TO DATE | WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY

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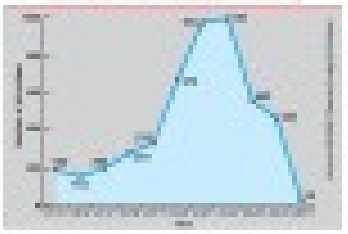
Rania Chakrita head Camera d'Or jury at Cannes Film Festival

Toxicology moves from obscurity to growth as demand for chemical safety experts rises

PG students are landing high-stakes roles across pharmaceutical labs, CROs, food safety and forensic science laboratories

ANRF cracks down on retractions to check plagiarism surge



IKS can improve interpretative skills in legal training

NMC removes MBBS seat limit to spur expansion, tackle rural doctor gap

Daily wage earners' suicides 31% of total, highest in a decade

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Casual labourers, a category that largely includes daily wage earners, constituted nearly one-fifth of and the biggest share of India's total workforce. The total number of suicide deaths in the country rose to 1.7 lakh in 2024, compared with 1.34 lakh in 2015

New Delhi: Daily wage earners accounted for 31% of all suicide deaths in 2024, the highest share in a decade (2015-2024), according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data.

A total of 52,910 daily wage earners died by suicide during the year, marking a sharp rise from the previous peak of 26.4% recorded in 2022.

Casual labourers, a category that largely includes daily wage earners, constituted nearly one-fifth of and the biggest share of India's total workforce.

The total number of suicide deaths in the country rose to 1.7 lakh in 2024, compared with 1.34 lakh in 2015.

A comparative analysis of suicide deaths since 2015 shows that daily wage earners, housewives and the self-employed continue to account for the three largest categories under "suicide victims by profession".

However, the share of suicides among housewives and the self-employed has declined over the past decade.

Similarly, the share of suicide deaths among persons engaged in the farming sector fell from 8.7% in 2016 to 6.2% in 2024. The farming category was introduced in the NCRB's Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India report in 2016.

According to the 2024 NCRB report, Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of suicides among daily wage earners at 10,556 — nearly one-fifth of all such deaths in the country — followed by Maharashtra (6,811), Telangana (5,745), Madhya Pradesh (5,299) and Chhattisgarh (3,413).

Among Union Territories, Delhi reported the highest number of such deaths at 343.

The report also noted that 62.9% of suicide victims in 2024 — around 1.1 lakh persons — had an annual income of less than Rs 1 lakh. Among the causes of suicide, "family problems" remained the leading reason, accounting for 35% of all deaths, followed by "illness" at 17.9%. The major means adopted for deaths by suicide was hanging (62.3%) and by consuming poison (24.5%).

'Success stories highlight impact of inclusive welfare policies'

▶ Continued from page 1

Amid financial constraints, he remained academically consistent, scoring 92.7% in class 10 and 91.4% in class 12. His performance earned him admission to the National Institute of Technology, Raipur, where scholarships supported his education for three years.

Congratulating Ajay, chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai said his achievement represents the "unwavering confidence of forest-dependent families". "It is a matter of pride that a youth who once collected tendu leaves will now be responsible for protecting the same forests," Sai said, adding that such success stories highlight the impact of inclusive welfare policies.

Ajay recalls that his aspirations were once limited to his village. "It was only after entering NIT that I realised I could aim higher. The forest has given me everything—livelihood, identity, and now a purpose to give back," he said, adding that his deep-rooted connection with forests shaped both his worldview and career choice. He recalled that his exposure during rural development work in Bastar further strengthened his resolve to join the forest service.

Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan appointed chief of strategic western naval command

New Delhi: Vice-Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan has been appointed as chief of the Navy's strategically important Mumbai-headquartered western naval command. Currently serving as deputy chief of naval staff, Vatsayan will succeed Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, who was on Saturday appointed Navy chief and will take charge from June 1, **reports Surendra Singh**.

Regarded as the Navy's 'strike force', or 'sword arm', the western naval command (WNC) is crucial for defending the Arabian Sea, protecting key energy routes and securing India's western maritime boundary. It guards major offshore assets, such as oil fields and pipelines, and facilitates maritime stability, with Mumbai and Karwar serving as key operational hubs.

National dropout rate just 0.3% at primary, 3.5% at upper primary

▶ Continued from page 1

The secondary stage has emerged as the biggest stress point. The national dropout rate is just 0.3% at primary and 3.5% at upper primary, but jumps to 11.5% at secondary level.

"While near-universal access has been achieved at the primary stage, enrolment at the higher secondary level... presents a significant opportunity to further expand participation," the report states. It adds that "strengthening transition rates at each stage, particularly after upper primary... can help ensure smoother progression and sustained engagement in schooling."

The report says the next phase of reform can no longer focus only on expanding enrolment or infrastructure, but must address "fragmented school structures, foundational learning deficits, inequities in inclusion, gaps in teacher and leadership ecosystems, infrastructure disparities, and governance weaknesses". Structural inefficiencies remain significant. More than one-third of schools have fewer than 50 students, while over 1 lakh schools continue to function as single-teacher institutions serving nearly 34 lakh students.

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In supersession to this University Advertisement No. **MLU/Estt./492/2026, dated: 13.02.2026**, the applications in online mode are invited from eligible Indian citizens as per UGC eligibility criteria Notification dated: 18th July, 2018 to fill up the Various Regular Faculty Positions of this University. Please refer website: www.mlu.ac.in for detailed vacancy notification wise:

- **Professor:** (Notification no. **MLU/Estt./1733/2026, dated:08.05.2026**)
- **Associate Professor:** (Notification no. **MLU/Estt./1734/2026, dated:08.05.2026**)
- **Assistant Professor:** (Notification no. **MLU/Estt./1735/2026, dated: 08.05.2026**)

The filled applications must be submitted online through the HIMS Portal (https://hims.odisha.gov.in), which will be available from **15.05.2026** onwards. Candidates are required to complete the application in all respect and upload all necessary supporting documents on or before **15.06.2026**.

After submitting the application online, a printout of the same along with all supporting documents duly self-attested by the applicant, must be sent only via Speed Post to the Registrar, Madhusudan Law University, Station Road, Cuttack, Odisha-753 003 so to reach on or before **30.06.2026** by 06:00 PM.

For detailed information, please visit University website www.mlu.ac.in.

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FEDGL00620014612	Malebennur - 8884276416	DAVANGERE - 9110855606	10/06/2026
FEDGL00220017664	HARIHAR - 8147533256	DAVANGERE - 9110855606	11/06/2026
FEDGL00440013455	Periapatna - 9449955714	Ramaswamy Circle - 9620136356	11/06/2026
FEDGL00510015407	BYADGI - 8970590276	RANEBENNUR - 8904013982	11/06/2026
FEDGL04040010276	Kudligi - 7760491423	HOSPET - 9743956995	11/06/2026
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FEDGL04040010337	Kudligi - 7760491423	HOSPET - 9743956995	19/06/2026
FEDGL00130008864	SULTHANPLYA - 9353708159	BTM Layout - 9980764782	20/06/2026
FEDGL00620014674	Malebennur - 8884276416	DAVANGERE - 9110855606	20/06/2026
FEDGL00940007760	Gangavathi - 9972317836	GANGAVATHI - 9972317836	20/06/2026
FEDGL00950011891	Kampli - 6361077968	CAR STREET BELLARY - 9535205038	20/06/2026
FEDGL01570019097	HASSAN MARKET - 8970429398	HASSAN MARKET - 8970429398	20/06/2026
FEDGL01930009619	SIRSI - 9845952878	SIRSI - 9845952878	20/06/2026
FEDGL02330008684	dharwad - 8152913405	DHARWAD - 8152913405	20/06/2026

Change in Venue or Date, if any, will be displayed on our Website https://www.fedfina.com/gold-loan/special-sections/auction-venue/. Customer who want to release their ornaments shall visit any of the above branch/es or contact at the number mentioned above on/or before auction Date subject to the terms and condition applicable. Auction will be conducted at respective Districts. In case the auction does not get completed on the given date due to any reasons, the auction in respect thereto shall be conducted on subsequent working days at district level as per above schedule. This would continue till the auction process is over. On failure of the first offline auction at District level, auction will also be initiated through the E-auction platforms of SAMIL https://gold.samil.in and/or e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. (AuctionTiger) - https://egold.auctiontiger.net/.

All participating bidders will be intimated subsequently with respect to acceptance or rejection of bids submitted by them.

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Applications are invited for the SKAC Post-Doctoral Fellowships. For detailed eligibility and application procedures, please visit: https://skaidia.ncra.tifr.res.in/#positions. The last date for receiving applications is 22 June, 2026.

TATA MEDICAL CENTER

PAPER RECORD DESTRUCTION NOTICE

This is to inform the patients/relatives of patients of Tata Medical Center that the hospital has taken a decision to shred the paper records of patients, registered to the hospital from 2011 to 2014 and who have not visited the facility after 31/12/2014. The electronic records will continue to be maintained and can be accessed and retrieved.

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Joint Certification by NCPUL (Ministry of Education) & NIELIT Chandigarh (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Govt. of India)

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e-Tender Notice

Name of Tender:
Lease of Commercial and Residential Plots from 'G' Block of Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai for 80 years of lease.

SNo	Plot No.	Plot Area (sqm)	FSI	Permissible Built Up Area (BUA) (sqm)	Reserve Rate (Rs/sqm of BUA)	Reserve Price (Rs)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Rs)		Tender Fee (Rs)
							Through Bank Guarantee	Through Online Transfer	
Tender for Commercial Plots									
1	C73	6,587.00	4.00	26,348.00	4,82,992/-	1272.58 Cr	20.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
2	C74	6,830.00	4.00	27,320.00	4,82,992/-	1319.53 Cr	20.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
3	C75	7,415.00	4.00	29,660.00	4,82,992/-	1432.55 Cr	20.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
4	C76	6,437.00	4.00	25,748.00	4,82,992/-	1243.60 Cr	20.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
5	C77	7,000.00	4.00	28,000.00	4,82,992/-	1352.37 Cr	20.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
Tender for Residential Plots									
6	R1.5	5,409.00	4.00	21,636.00	3,52,008/-	761.60Cr	15.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
7	R1.6	4,974.00	4.00	19,896.00	3,52,008/-	700.35Cr	15.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
8	R1.7	5,876.00	4.00	23,504.00	3,52,008/-	827.35Cr	15.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST
9	R5	2,663.00	4.00	10,652.00	3,52,008/-	374.95Cr	15.00 Cr	5.00 Lakhs	1.00Lakh + GST

Bid document download : 12/05/2026 (18:00 hrs) to 25/06/2026 (17:00 hrs)
Last date of receipt of queries/ clarification : 22/05/2026 (10:00 hrs)
Site Visit : 22/05/2026 (11:00 hrs)
Pre-Bid Meeting : 25/05/2026 at 15:00 hrs at 4th floor, Committee Room, New MMRDA Office Building, Bandra (East), Mumbai – 51 + Video Conferencing.
Last date of online submission : 25/06/2026 (17:00 hrs)
Date of bid closing : 25/06/2026 (17:01 hrs) to 25/06/2026 (18:00 hrs)

Note:- The e-Tender can be downloaded from e-Tendering Portal: https://mahatenders.gov.in/nicgep/app. Any additional information, corrigendum & help for uploading & downloading the e-tender, may be availed by contacting MMRDA's e-tendering service desk at the following ID: support-eproc@nic.in or call us on 022-65967445.

For further information, if required you may please contact Deputy Metropolitan Commissioner, Land & Estate Cell, MMRDA on Telephone Number – 022-65967403, 022-65964173, 022-65964164.
Email: for commercial plots - bkccommercialplots@mailmmrda.maharashtra.gov.in
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Date: 11/05/2026
Place: Mumbai

Sd/-
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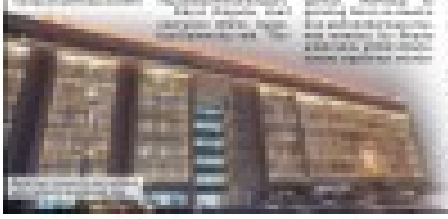
Galgotias University rises in Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings 2026



CISCE keeps policy flexible amid NEP 2020 three-language push

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Insta 'blocked' Rahul posts due to govt rules, claims Cong

New Delhi: Congress on Sunday claimed that Instagram has "blocked" **Rahul Gandhi**'s reel and photo post featuring him and actor-politician Vijay due to the rules of the ministry of electronics and information technology, even as govt sources denied the charge.

Gandhi was in Chennai to attend the oath-taking ceremony of TVK's Vijay as the Tamil Nadu CM and later shared several pictures with him on social media.

In a post on X, Gandhi's aide Srivatsa claimed Instagram has "blocked his reel and pictures featuring him and Vijay". The viral reel had gathered 12 million views in less than an hour, while the picture post had already reached 46 million people, Srivatsa stated.

"Meta cites no reason as to why his account has become inaccessible. The 'glitch' is because of MEITY rules! Rahul's social media accounts have been suppressed for a long time. His X reach, YouTube views, and Insta followers have all been suppressed," he alleged. This is how India's opposition leader's voice is curtailed, he added.

"It is clarified that MeitY had nothing to do with this. It was because of the platform's internal system mistakenly flagging the post for blocking, which has now been restored," a ministry source said. PTI

Udhayanidhi is DMK legislative party leader

Chennai: Former deputy chief minister **Udhayanidhi Stalin** was elected DMK's legislative party leader on Sunday, a day before the first session of 17th assembly has been convened. Since DMK is the principal opposition party, Udhayanidhi will be the leader of opposition.

According to a statement from DMK, former minister K N Nehru will be the DMK's deputy legislative party leader and party senior E V Velu will be the party whip. The decision to elect Udhayanidhi as the party floor leader was taken at the DMK MLAs meeting held on Thursday. In 2021, former CM M K Stalin was elected the legislative party leader by the DMK MLAs.Because of Stalin's defeat in the recently held assembly election, Udhayanidhi has taken over the mantle from Stalin.

The announcement from DMK comes a day ahead of the swearing-in ceremony of MLAs and a couple of days ahead of the confidence motion. TNN

Give me time, will gradually fulfil what I promised: Vijay

'A New Era Of Real Secularism And Social Justice Starts'

▶Continued from page 1

TVK emerged as the single largest party in the 234-member assembly with 108 seats but fell short of the 118-seat majority mark in this April's elections. Govt formation became possible after support from Congress, CPI, CPM, VCK and IUML, taking the alliance tally to 121 seats. Opposition DMK won 59 seats while AIADMK secured 47.

In his maiden address as CM, Vijay launched a direct attack on previous DMK govt, alleging Tamil Nadu had been left with debt of Rs 10 lakh crore and an empty treasury. "I will release a white paper so you can understand exactly what state Tamil Nadu's finances are in. I want to run a transparent govt," he said, signalling a fresh political battle with DMK over fiscal management.

At the same time, Vijay sought patience from supporters expecting rapid rollout of campaign promises. "I request you to give me some time. I will gradually fulfil what I promised. I will do only what is possible," he said.

PTI

Actor Trisha Krishnan greets Vijay's mother Shoba Chandrasekhar during the TVK chief's swearing-in ceremony in Chennai on Sunday

Vijay pledged clean governance and warned party colleagues against misuse of power. "I will not touch even a single paisa of public money. I don't need to," he said. "I will not commit wrongs and will not let others do either, including those in my own govt."

The new CM listed education, ration supplies, healthcare, drinking water, roads and public transport among his immediate priorities and promised strict action on law and order, women's safety and drug trafficking. "You can trust Vijay 100%. I belong equally to Hindus, Muslims and Christians," he said in a message directed at minorities. He later held a review meeting with senior officials on law and order.

Vijay thanked alliance politicians, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, CPM's M A Baby and P Shanmugam, CPI's D Raja and VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan for backing his govt.

Calling his swearing-in "a new beginning", Vijay urged supporters to help build "fresh governance". "A new era of real secularism and social justice starts now," he said.

Tamil Nadu has long blurred lines between cinema and politics — from screenwriter-CMs M Karunanidhi and CN Annadurai to matinee idols M G Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa — but Vijay is the first film superstar since MGR to build a party from scratch and ride it to office.

Drawing from his personal journey, Vijay described himself as the son of "an aspiring assistant director" and rejected any aura of divine destiny. "I am not a deva thoothan (divine messenger). I know what hunger means. I did not come from some royal family. I am just like you," he told cheering supporters.

Cong yet to name Kerala CM, suspense continues

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Thiruvananthapuram: KPCC president Sunny Joseph on Sunday said AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, will soon announce the next chief minister of Kerala from among the three contenders who have already been "interviewed" by the party's top leadership.

Speaking to the media after returning from New Delhi, where discussions were held between the Congress high command and the three CM aspirants, Joseph said he did not see the need for another round of talks with state leaders on the issue.

"Everyone has been asked to refrain from controversial moves," Joseph said, declining to specify a date for the announcement.

Asked if the matter would be discussed with UDF constituents, Joseph said the decision rested with the Congress leadership.

Party sources said that consultations involving Sonia Gandhi, Rahul and veteran Congressman A K Antony are expected to play a decisive role in the selection process.

> "Everyone has been asked to refrain from controversial moves (demonstrations, posters, etc), and there has been a reflection at the ground level. A good decision will be made, and everyone will move forward together
> — SUNNY JOSEPH, KPCC PRESIDENT

Meanwhile, the camps backing the three contenders — K C Venugopal, V D Satheesan and Ramesh Chennithala — remain optimistic, each convinced that the final decision could tilt in their favour.

The Venugopal camp is understood to be confident that the Congress leadership will attach importance to the majority opinion within the Congress legislature party.

The Satheesan camp argues that strong public sentiment and the backing of several UDF constituent partners have strengthened his prospects.

Both Satheesan and Ramesh Chennithala are said to be satisfied with the opportunity given by the high command to present their claims in detail. Chennithala, in particular, is believed to be relying on his seniority and long political experience, hoping that the leadership may finally recognise his claim this time.

During the discussions, Rahul Gandhi reportedly told the three contenders that all of them were capable and deserving candidates for the post and that the final decision would be based on merit and broader political considerations.

However, after hearing all sides, Rahul Gandhi is understood to have conveyed that the prevailing political atmosphere was not conducive to an immediate announcement.

Following their meeting with Kharge and Rahul, all three contenders have maintained silence in public. Sources said the high command has issued strict instructions that even the slightest act of indiscipline or public mobilisation by supporters would not be tolerated.

Rift widens in AIADMK, rebels set to back Vijay during floor test

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Rift in AIADMK appeared to widen Sunday with party seniors C Ve Shanmugam and S P Velumani holding meeting with MLAs even as general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami convened a separate meeting of district secretaries.

AIADMK sources said majority of MLAs and district secretaries attended the meeting convened by the rebel group. The meetings, held on the day when TVK president C Joseph Vijay was being sworn in as Tamil Nadu CM, also discussed about supporting his party in the assembly during the floor test.

AIADMK sources said the rebel group was likely to vote for TVK, claiming the decision was taken in the meeting of MLAs with Shanmugam at his residence in Chennai.

"They have decided to vote for TVK in the assembly and to come out of the NDA headed by BJP," an AIADMK source said.

In the recently held assembly election, AIADMK got only 47 seats and lost the status of opposition party. This is the first time that AIADMK is not in the opposition for more than five years.

Shanmugam and Velumani had proposed the idea of backing TVK soon after the election results came, but EPS refused. Disgruntled, the rebel faction sought the support of MLAs and got backing of more than two-thirds of the MLAs required for immunity from anti-defection law.

Meanwhile, Shanmugam contacted TVK general secretary N Anand. "But Vijay didn't oblige. He wanted AIADMK MLAs supporting TVK to resign and face bypolls on TVK's symbol.

"But the AIADMK MLAs are reluctant to do so as they might face backlash in their constituencies if they resign," sources said. AIADMK sources said efforts by few party seniors for patching up the two factions had failed.

DMK left state coffers empty, says Vijay; Stalin says debt 'within permissible limits'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Hours after new chief minister C Joseph Vijay claimed Sunday that Tamil Nadu's coffers were "empty", former CM MK Stalin hit back saying the state's debt was "within permissible limits" and urged his successor not to "deceive" those who voted for him.

"TN does have the money. What's needed is the will to give it to the people and the ability to govern," Stalin said in a statement in response to Vijay's charge that the previous DMK govt had left the state with a debt of Rs 10 lakh crore and the treasury empty.

Vijay has said he will assess the fiscal situation and release a white paper. Stalin pointed out that his govt had explained the state's financial position in its last budget in Feb this year. "Only after that, you gave various promises to the people...Don't divert the issue," Stalin said.

While wishing Vijay on assuming charge, Stalin asked him not to start a blame game. "Don't start saying right away the govt has no money," he said.

Stalin cited his govt's countless welfare schemes despite challenges such as "Covid, floods, as well as the neglect from the BJP-led Union govt".

He wished Vijay would soon "learn the nuances" of administration.

Vijay swearing-in redraws political grammar in TN

Ram.Sundaram
@timesofindia.com

Chennai: In Tamil Nadu politics, swearing-in ceremonies are rarely mere formalities. Every element — the venue, guest list, sequence of events, first act after taking oath and first public appearance — carries a message. Chief minister C Joseph Vijay's swearing-in on Sunday was no different.

The guest list reflected the unusual coalition behind Vijay's rise. Retired IAS officer U Sagayam, known for his anti-corruption image, attended the event even as lottery baron Santiago Martin, who faces money laundering charges, participated as his son-in-law Aadhav Arjuna took oath as a minister. Martin's wife, Leema Rose Martin, elected on an AIADMK ticket, was also present, though other AIADMK functionaries stayed away.

In another surprise, M K Alagiri's daughter Kayalvizhi attended despite the DMK brass skipping the ceremony. BJP state president Nainar Nagendran and former governor Tamilisai Soundararajan were also present despite TVK's alliance with Congress.

The front row carried a personal touch. Vijay's parents, filmmaker S A Chandrasekar and Shoba, were visibly emotional, while actor Trisha Krishnan made her first public appearance since the controversy over her appearance with Vijay at a wedding in April.

Suvendu may move into a new home near Didi's

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Bengal's first BJP chief minister, Suvendu Adhikari, may soon change his Kolkata address from his Chinar Park flat to the Soujanya complex in Alipore.

PWD is actively considering whether Soujanya can be used as the temporary residence of the chief minister. Senior police officials, led by joint police commissioner Rupesh Kumar, visited the building on Sunday to assess its security arrangements. A final decision is awaited.

Built at a cost of over Rs 180 crore, the palatial structure was constructed specifically to house CMs and other VVIPs. Since its inauguration in 2018 by then CM Mamata Banerjee, it has remained largely unused.

Adhikari's ancestral home, Shantikunj, in East Midnapore's Contai, where his parents and family reside, has seen him insist that no barriers be erected so that common people are not inconvenienced.

Soujanya is located within Bhabanipur constituency, which Adhikari won by defeating Mamata. Incidentally, it is located less than 2km from her Kalighat residence.

Suvendu aide case spreads to Jharkhand, UP

Kolkata: A multi-state manhunt is underway for suspects in last week's murder of Bengal CM Suvendu Adhikari's aide Chandranath Rath, with a car used in the crime traced to Jharkhand and questioning of three men in UP, **reports Dwaipayan Ghosh**.

Sources revealed on Sunday that the primary vehicle used in the ambush — a silver Nissan Micra fitted with a fake Siliguri number plate — was from Jharkhand. The probe has now expanded significantly. One SIT team has travelled to UP following the identification of suspicious mobile numbers active in the area. Simultaneously, another SIT team is coordinating with Odisha police also.

AAP, BJP workers clash across Punjab

Chandigarh: A day after Punjab minister Sanjeev Arora was arrested by ED and taken to Delhi, AAP on Sunday launched statewide protests against the BJP-led central govt, accusing it of "weaponising and misusing central agencies to intimidate opposition and destabilise non-BJP govts". AAP workers held demonstrations and gheraoed BJP offices at district headquarters, raising slogans against PM Narendra Modi and govt.

At a few places, both sides nearly came to blows. In Ludhiana, AAP and BJP workers shoved each other outside the local BJP office. TNN

TMC says its worker killed in violence

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Khejuri/Hooghly: Trinamool on Sunday shared a picture of a bloodied corpse on its social media handle and claimed the deceased was a party worker from Hooghly who was killed in post-poll violence.

The party also blamed BJP for fire in East Midnapore's Hooghly on Saturday in which 60 shops were gutted. BJP has denied the allegations.

Sharing a picture of the corpse on X, Trinamool claimed the deceased, Sahadeb Bag, was a Nokunda gram panchayat member. "How many more lives will be lost to political violence," the Trinamool said in its post. Local BJP workers said Bag was killed for personal or financial reasons. A police officer said Bag's body was found in a field.

Meanwhile, Trinamool national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee alleged that the shops gutted in the fire in Khejuri belonged to his party workers and that the act of arson was committed by "BJP-backed miscreants."

Khejuri assembly constituency is in Nandigram area, a stronghold of CM Suvendu Adhikari.

Fall in LS tally dented BJP's votes by 44k

▶Continued from page 1

All elected members of Parliament and assemblies, which leave out nominated lawmakers, make up the electoral college. Parliament and assemblies have equal voting share, but while the vote of every MP has the same value (it was 700 in 2022), the weight of an MLA's vote varies depending on the size of population (as per 1971 census) his assembly represents.

A UP MLA's vote at the value of 208 was almost 30 times that of a Sikkim MLA's, with the value of 7 in 2022. The figure is likely to remain more or less the same next year as the census figure is a constant and so is the strength of an assembly, barring vacancies. The existence of J&K assembly, which was dissolved in 2018 and was not part of the last presidential election, will be a factor, though marginal.

The fall in its LS tally dented BJP's votes by 44,100 in the electoral college, which had a total strength of 10,86,431 in 2022. A poor run in assembly polls could have compromised its authority to dictate the terms, even with allies, as has been the case with previous govts when the principal party, be BJP or Congress, was short of majority.

In the next round of polls before the presidential election scheduled for July next year, the most important is UP for its sheer weight of over 83,800 votes in the electoral college. Only a big loss for BJP in its stronghold, where it had suffered reverses in the LS elections, can make some dent in NDA's expected domination.

Himanta to take oath as Assam CM tomorrow

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Guwahati: NDA is set for its third straight stint in govt in Assam after governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya invited

Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday to form the new govt. BJP's Sarma will take oath as CM on Tuesday.

The governor's move came after NDA, led by Sarma, staked its claim with the support of 102 MLAs in the 126-member assembly. Sarma, accompanied by BJP central observer JP Nadda, co-observer and Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini, and allies AGP and BPF, submitted a list of the supporting MLAs to Acharya at Lok Bhavan.

The governor will swear in Sarma and his ministers at the Khanapara Veterinary College ground. PM Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh, BJP president Nitin Nabin, and others will be present, Nadda said.

Sarma was unanimously elected leader of the BJP legislature party, with AGP and BPF MLAs also backing him. NDA's 102 MLAs include 82 of BJP and 10 each of AGP and BPF. This will be the second NDA govt in state headed by Sarma. BJP and its allies made history in 2016 by forming Assam's first NDA govt, ending Congress's 15-year term under CM Tarun Gogoi.

PM says support 'Make in India' products

▶Continued from page 1

The PM said his govt initially focused on achieving universal LPG coverage for the poor and was now expanding affordable piped gas connections across the country. "By using these resources wisely, we can save significant foreign exchange over the next year. Our govt is working tirelessly to navigate these challenges. In other countries, a bag of urea costs around Rs 3,000, but our farmers are getting it for just Rs 300," he added.

Modi also asked people to support 'Make in India' products and choose Indian alternatives for everyday items such as toothpaste and pitched for the use of electric vehicles and solar-powered pumps.

Pension funds can bid for highway projects

Dipak.Dash@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Govt has now allowed venture capital, private equity, infrastructure and pension funds to bid for highway projects under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, marking a paradigm shift since the sector was opened to private players in the early 2000s. So far, only highway developers and construction companies were eligible to bid for such projects.

The road transport ministry has modified the bidding conditions for Build-Operate-Transfer (Toll) projects, as part of its efforts to attract greater private investment into the sector. Officials said Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) and Foreign Investment Funds (FIFs), with their deep pockets, are expected to bring in better construction firms for project execution, while ensuring better return on investment in highway projects.

Typically, these entities come with finances, with pension and infrastructure funds providing long-term capital. It remains to be seen how much interest is there from the funds and how they structure the deals.

The modified bidding document notified by the highways ministry said, "Bidder may be a natural person, private entity, govt-owned entity, AIF, FIF or any combination of them with a formal intent to enter into a joint bidding agreement to form a consortium."

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
Yelahanka, BANGALORE - 560 064
Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in
EOI NOTICE No: RWF/M/EOI/AMS/1
Dated: 08.05.2026
Expression of Interest: On behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer invites expression of interest for the following work through physical format or through Email.
EOI No.: RWF/M/EOI/AMS/1 Dated: 08.05.2026. **Name of the Work:** Outsourcing the Machining of Axles for Railway Rolling Stock. **Due date of submision of EOI:** 18.05.2026.
More details on this "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST" for the above mentioned work can be viewed on our website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in
Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/Projects

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
OPEN E-TENDER
The following **e-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in.** Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy.CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or AMM/HQ, 9163340713 (For Notice No. A) & Dy. CMM/M-II/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340708 or AMM/M, 9163340706 (For Notice No. B). **Office Address:** Office of The PCMM /CLW/ Chittaranjan. **[A] No.COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 07/05/2026. Sl. No.; Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Quantity; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Times (IST)** are as follows: **[1]; 70261140;** Distributed Power Wireless Control System for Three Phase Freight Locomotive Without Brake Interface Unit (BIU) (One set of DPWCS Equipment shall comprise Equipment for Two Locomotives), as per RDSO Spec. No. RDSO/2019/EL/ SPEC/ 0142, Rev.0 with Comprehensive Annual Maintenance for 03 (three) years will be as per CLW AMC Condition No. CLW/AMC/ C-D&D/02 issued on August-2016. **[Warranty Period:** 72 Months after the date of delivery]; **221.00 Set;** ₹5000000.00; **30/05/2026 at 11:00 AM. [2]; 73263702;** Spheri block for WAG-9H speen.: RDSO/ 2007/EL/SPEC /0051 (REV.4) **[Warranty Period:** 72 Months after the date of delivery]; **25468.00 Numbers;** ₹2000000.00; **03/06/2026 at 11:00 AM. [B] No. COS/CRJ/ PUB/ e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 07/05/2026. Sl. No.:[1]. Tender No.:75264179. Brief Description of Item:** Supply & Installation of Thermal cum Sound Insulation for WAG-9HC loco as per Drg. No. Drawing no. 1209-08.130-616 Speen.: CLW/MS/3/160 Alt. 1 or latest **[Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity:190.00 Set. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹544380.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 30/05/2026 at 11:00 AM.**
PR8/344 PCMM/CLW/CRJ
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TAMIL NADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION
HEAD OFFICE, CMRL ADMIN BUILDING,
POONAMALLEE HIGH ROAD, KOYAMBEDU, CHENNAI - 600 107.
Ph.No. (044) 26426773. Email id.: tncsc.tn@nic.in
CIN:U15137TN1972SGC006157
SHORT E-TENDER NOTICE
BS3/014884/2026 Date: 09.05.2026
Short e-tender No.BS3/014884/2026 -TNCSC/26-27
Tamilnadu Civil Supplies Corporation invites online short electronic tender for the **"PURCHASE OF 600 LAKH NUMBERS OF FORTIFIED RBD PALMOLEIN OIL 1 LITRE POUCHES (910 gms)" for 3 months of July 2026, August 2026 and September 2026.**
Complete short e-tender document can be viewed and downloaded from **https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app.**
The bidders have to participate only through online bidding with Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III.
Last Date and Time for Online Submission : 26.05.2026 upto 11.00 A.M.
DIPR/1846/Tender/2026 MANAGING DIRECTOR

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDERS
(Through KPP Portal Only)
BWSSB invites tenders in two stage tender system from eligible contractors for the following works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Amount put to Tender / EMD Amount
Office of the Chief Engineer (Design &QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore - 560 009.		
IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/95/2026-27		Dt:05.05.2026
1	Sinking of 6.5 inch dia new borewell and energization with necessary accessories at various locations of Sarvagnanagara Constituency coming under AEE(BW&PS) North Sub Division.	Rs. 156.95 Lakhs / Rs. 2,36,000/-
For the above work, the last date for receipt of tenders:**18.05.2026 upto 16:00 Hrs.** Technical bids will be opened on: **19.05.2026 at 16.00 Hrs.**		
IFT No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE(D)/TA/97/2026-27		Dt:05.05.2026
2	Construction of Centralised water and meter testing Laboratory at CJF premises, Malleshwaram, Bangalore.	Rs. 4,02,36,252/- / Rs. 6,03,600/-
3	Construction of Marriage hall (Ambedkar Samudaya Bhavana) at T.K. Halli.	Rs. 3,96,03.281/- / Rs. 5,94,100/-
For the above works, the last date for receipt of tenders:**25.05.2026 upto 16:00 Hrs.** Technical bids will be opened on: **26.05.2026 at 16.00 Hrs.** Sd/- Chief Engineer (Design & QA)		
The details regarding the tender and participatin in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours. DIPR/CP/JA/570/2026-27		

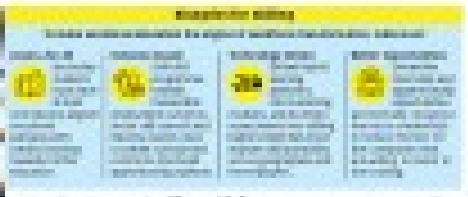
Creative economy boom is faster than what we imagine

ICAI updates CA curriculum to keep pace with digital transformation

Nurturing talent in pharma sector

NITI Aayog roadmaps AI integration for schools

Mainstreaming vocational education key to securing future of workforce



TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026

Bank credit to the MSME sector rose sharply on the back of regulatory measures, such as the enhanced limit under the CGTMSE scheme. In FY26, MSME credit grew by ~27%, taking its total share to 18.5%. Meanwhile, with the support of the ECLGS, the gross NPA of MSME declined to 3.3% in Sept 2025, compared to 11% in March 2020

ECLGS | Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme

CGTMSE | Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises

Trends in SCB Credit to MSME Sector

GNPA (%) of MSME Sector Declined

Net FPI outflows cross ₹2L cr, top FY25 record within 5 mths

Selling Abates, Foreign Funds In No Rush To Buy: Goldman Sachs

Partha.Sinha@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Net outflow by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from the stock market for the current year crossed the Rs 2-lakh-crore mark for the first time ever. This also showed up in aggregate foreign holding in Indian stocks falling to a 14-year low at 14.7%, a level much below the comparative data for domestic institutions, which is at 18.9%, a report by JM Financial showed.

So far in a little over four months till May 8, FPIs have net taken out nearly Rs 2.1 lakh crore from India, making it the worst yearly number since 1993, the year these fund managers were allowed to invest in domestic stocks, data from Sebi and NSDL showed. More than half of this was in March alone, soon after the war in West Asia started and the rupee crashed to below the 95/$ level, then the lowest level ever against the greenback. In April, the selling slowed to Rs 60,847 crore. In whole of 2025, the total outflow from stocks was Rs 1.7 lakh crore.

A report by Goldman Sachs said that although the intensity of FPI selling has slowed, it'll be some time before foreign funds start buying again into Indian stocks.

"The bulk of foreign selling is likely over, after record outflows over the recent months," the report said. "Various approaches using flows, positioning and ownership trends suggest foreign flows are now close to downside scenarios." Analysts at the US-based global financial major estimated that the downside risk of incremental foreign selling could be limited at about $4-5 billion, translating to nearly Rs 50,000 crore at the upper end of the band.

On the other hand, the report noted that while the bulk of foreign selling is likely over, "foreign re-buying may still be impeded in the near term, for a few reasons."

For one, empirical evidence suggests foreign funds won't immediately return to buy in India when oil prices fall. "Foreign capital did not return to Indian equities in the early-April oil correction, despite the significant sell-off during the preceding oil rally in March. "Past evidence shows that foreign flows tend to be modestly positively correlated with falling oil prices in the short-term."

Secondly, earnings revisions have become an increasingly important variable guiding foreign flows in Indian equities. While much of foreign selling may have already occurred in anticipation of the forthcoming downgrade cycle, low visibility around a recovery will likely limit foreign re-buying in the near-term, it said.

And lastly, "compared to north Asian markets, India offers a less attractive risk-reward as it trades at significantly higher growth-adjusted valuations, on top of the ongoing investor concerns over the potential adverse impact of AI," the report said.

Worst Yearly Net Outflow Since 1993

Monthly net FPI flows from equities in 2026		Five biggest net FPI outflow years	
Month	Flows (₹cr)	Year	Net outflow (₹cr)
Jan	-35,962	2026	-2,06,200
Feb	22,615	2025	-1,66,286
March	-1,17,775	2022	-1,21,439
April	-60,847	2018	-33,014
May*	-14,231	2008	-52,987
Total	-2,06,200		

* Till May 8, 2026; Source: NSDL

Gig workers must work 90 days a year for social security benefits

Shiva.Rajora @timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Gig and platform workers need to work for at least 90 days annually with an aggregator to avail of social security benefits, said the final set of rules formulated under the new Code on Social Security (CoSS). In case a worker is engaged with multiple aggregators, the threshold is raised to 120 days, a decision that will affect those working with Swiggy and Zomato or Uber, Ola and Rapido.

The rules pave the way for the states to notify their own rules by taking cue from the central ones.

Under these latest CoSS rules, an eligible gig and platform worker includes all such workers engaged by the aggregator directly or through an associate, holding or subsidiary company or through a third party. Any income earned from aggregator on a day will be treated as one-day with the platform.

For those on multiple platforms, workdays are cumulative. For instance, earning from three aggregators in one calendar day will be counted as three days of engagement.

Besides, the rules put the onus on aggregators to upload details of every gig worker engaged with them on the central govt portal within 45 days, including registering all new appointments and exits on a real-time or daily basis. This is being done to allow issuing identity cards to each eligible registered gig and platform worker.

The rules also provide for aggregators to face annual interest of 12% if they fail to contribute towards social security benefits of the gig workers registered with them.

"If any aggregator fails to pay any amount of contribution payable under sub-section (4) of section 114, within such time as may be specified by the central govt for such purpose, such aggregator shall be liable to pay interest on the amount of contribution, to be paid, at the rate of 1%, for every month or part of a month comprised in the period from the date on which such payment was due till such amount is actually paid," the rules said.

The rules also provide that a gig worker will stop being eligible for social security benefits, such as health insurance, life and accident insurance once they turn 60, or if they haven't worked at least 90 days with one aggregator — or 120 days across multiple aggregators — during the previous financial year.

FACE 12% INTEREST

- Aggregators need to upload details of every gig worker engaged with them on central govt portal within 45 days
- They need to register all new appointments and exits on a real-time or daily basis
- Aggregators will face 12% interest if they fail to contribute towards social security benefits of gig workers

Crude likely to stay high: ADB economist

New Delhi: Crude oil prices are likely to remain higher for longer due to disruptions caused by the prolonged West Asia crisis, ADB chief economist Albert Park said.

"With a higher oil price expectation, we have it at $96 per barrel on average for 2026 as per the new reference scenario. It should stay elevated at $80 per barrel in 2027. Our view is that oil prices are likely to stay higher for longer," Park said. Future prices are indicating higher levels further into next year than earlier, he added. However, he said, "We have also seen a premium in spot market prices over nearby futures due to the current supply shortage." On the impact of the ongoing West Asia crisis on India, Park said it could shave off 0.6% from the country's GDP growth, bringing it down to 6.3%, while also stoking inflation in the current financial year. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in April projected India's GDP growth to remain "robust" at 6.9% in the current fiscal and rise to 7.3% in the next fiscal, driven by strong domestic demand. It had projected inflation at 4.5% for the current fiscal.

"For India, we find that growth would be lower by 0.6% (FY27). This is based on our model scenario. But it would not negatively affect growth next year. India would bounce back," he said. AGENCIES

RBI signs MoU with ECB on cooperation

Mumbai: RBI governor Sanjay Malhotra and European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde signed an MoU on cooperation in the field of central banking, updating a previous agreement signed in 2015. The MoU provides framework for regular exchange of information, policy dialogue and technical cooperation between RBI and ECB in areas of mutual interest. TNN

CII seeks fuel tax cut, capex up 67%

New Delhi: India's private sector capital expenditure rose 67% to Rs 7.7 lakh crore in Sept 2025 from Rs 4.6 lakh crore a year ago, CII said, as it unveiled a five-point action agenda amid the West Asia crisis and beyond, comprising a phased drawdown of the central excise cut on petrol and diesel. AGENCIES

Pidilite signals further price hike

New Delhi: Pidilite Industries is considering another round of price hike due to inflation in raw materials from the ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia, said the company's MD, Sudhanshu Vats. Pidilite's raw material basket has seen a weighted-average increase of around 40-50%. AGENCIES

PEs, pension funds can bid for highway projects

Dipak.Dash@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Govt has now allowed venture capital, private equity, infrastructure and pension funds to bid for highway projects under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, marking a paradigm shift since the sector was opened to private players in the early 2000s. So far, only highway developers and construction companies were eligible to bid for such projects.

The road transport ministry has modified the bidding conditions for Build-Operate-Transfer (Toll) projects, as part of its efforts to attract greater private investment into the sector. Officials said Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) and Foreign Investment Funds (FIFs), with their deep pockets, are expected to bring in better construction firms for project execution, while ensuring better return on investment in highway projects.

Typically, these entities come with finances, with pension and infrastructure funds providing long-term capital. It remains to be seen how much interest is there from the funds and how they structure the deals.

The modified bidding document notified by the highways ministry said, "Bidder may be a natural person, private entity, govt-owned entity, AIF, FIF or any combination of them with a formal intent to enter into a joint bidding agreement to form a consortium." Highway builders and construction companies will continue to bid for such projects as well. The document also lays down separate criteria for evaluating bids submitted by alternative funds and traditional highway developers. For highway construction firms, eligibility will be assessed on the basis of both technical and financial capacity.

"The concept of a concessionaire in BOT projects is ideally that of an entity capable of arranging finances, appointing construction firms for execution, and managing highway stretches efficiently. It is similar to filmmaking — a producer arranges funding and brings together the right director and actors to create a successful film. This change in norms will bring a major shift and attract quality investment into the sector," an official said.

NEW STEP

- Road transport ministry has modified bidding conditions for Build-Operate-Transfer (Toll) projects to attract more private investment
- Alternative Investment Funds and Foreign Investment Funds are expected to bring in better construction firms for project execution, say officials
- This will ensure better return on investment in highway projects

TOI IN THE CLASSROOM

Why MF Expense Ratios are Showing Higher Numbers

Investors are noticing higher expense ratios across several mutual fund schemes these days. This is largely due to a change in the way fund houses report costs, following new guidelines issued by the regulator Sebi

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Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

What Is The Change In Reporting TER?

Until March 31, Sebi had required fund houses to report only the base expenses and the GST on those expenses as part of TER. The base expense ratio included management fees paid to the fund manager and the asset management company for running the portfolio, along with operating expenses such as registrar and transfer agent fees, custody charges, audit costs and other day-to-day administrative expenses for direct plans. In the case of regular plans, distributor commissions and servicing fees were also included. Other costs, such as brokerage, transaction costs and statutory levies linked to actual trades, were charged to the scheme's net asset value within regulatory limits but were excluded from the reported TER. With effect from April 1, this reporting framework has been revised. Fund houses are now required to include these previously excluded components.

How Does The New Structure Work?

Under the revised disclosure norms, TER now represents the full cost of running a mutual fund scheme. It reflects not just the fixed and recurring expenses of managing the scheme, but also costs that arise from portfolio churn and execution activity. This is aimed at offering investors a more transparent view of what they are paying.

Why Is TER Higher On Particular Days ?

In funds that see frequent buying and selling of securities, such as arbitrage funds and equity savings funds, investors may notice that the reported TER spikes on certain days. This happens because while base expenses remain largely stable, brokerage, transaction costs and trade-related statutory levies are incurred only on days when the fund actually executes trades. Since all expense components are annualised over 365 days for reporting purposes, days with higher trading activity can result in a higher annualised TER for that day.

What Should Investors Do?

When evaluating a MF or comparing expense ratios across schemes, investors should focus primarily on the base expense ratio, as it best captures the ongoing cost structure of the fund. A consistently high TER, however, may indicate that a fund follows a high-churn strategy, sees frequent inflows and redeployment of capital, or carries a material arbitrage component.

— PRASHANT MAHESH

Loans outrun deposits, margins dip

Mayur.Shetty
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Indian banks are navigating a paradox where credit growth is outstripping deposit growth but margins are under pressure. On paper, a scenario where credit outstrips deposit growth should be a recipe for soaring profitability. However, a deeper look into the recent earnings calls of major public sector lenders shows that margins remain under pressure as deposit costs rise, low-cost current and savings account balances shrink and competition for safe highly-rated borrowers intensifies.

The pressure on net interest margins, or NIMs, was a recurring theme in the earnings calls of banks. While systemic credit growth for scheduled commercial banks stands at around 16%, deposit growth is trailing at 12.3%, forcing lenders to rely increasingly on costlier retail term deposits and bulk deposits to fund loan growth.

A PARADOX

Banks have historically depended on current account and savings account, or CASA, deposits as a low-cost source of funding. That pool is now shrinking as savers shift money into equities, mutual funds, gold and real estate amid rising financialisation and inflation. SBI chairman CS Setty said the bank was adapting to the change in savings behaviour. "We are strengthening our liability franchise as savings increasingly shift towards market-linked instruments," he said. On Friday, SBI surprised markets with only a 4% net interest income growth despite double digit credit growth.

Bank of India MD and chief executive Rajneesh Karnatak said the banking system was seeing structural changes in deposits. "There has been a structural change which has happened as far as the colour of the deposit is concerned. A lot of funds are flowing out of the banking system into other asset classes like equity, mutual fund, gold, real estate and others. So there has been a lot of competition among the banks on how to fund this credit growth which is coming," he said. To bridge the funding gap, banks are mobilising retail term deposits aggressively. SBI's term deposits grew by around 14.7%, while Bank of Baroda reported growth of 14.8%.

Bank of Baroda MD Debadatta Chand said deposit pricing remained elevated because of liquidity conditions. "If the liquidity continues to be easy the cost of deposit can go down. If the liquidity remains tight the way it is then possibly deposit rates will be sticky at this point of time," Chand said.

Noel's vote signals widening Tata Trusts rift since '25

▶ Continued from page 1

Noel Tata voting against both Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh significantly curtails the influence of both men within the wider Tata Trusts ecosystem, even as they remain vice-chairmen of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) and the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) — the two apex trusts that together hold a controlling stake in Tata Sons.

The rift between Noel and the duo deepened after Srinivasan and Singh publicly backed a listing of Tata Sons, a move Noel opposed.

In an email to Tata Trusts CEO, Mehli said "My affidavit in response to the board composition change report for SDTT explains the reasons why I chose to take such a decision." According to the affidavit, Noel, Srinivasan and Singh had wrongly voted against him at SDTT. He also said that Srinivasan had taken part in the vote even though his term had already ended at SDTT.

TEDT, with a corpus of Rs 5,600 crore, has been among the most prominent Indian donors to Ivy League institutions, including Harvard Business School and Cornell University, and owns and operates two cancer hospitals in India while supporting 17 others through grants.

Following the board changes, Noel remains chairman and perpetual trustee of TEDT.

Mehli continues in his role as perpetual trustee, while Jehangir holds a fixed-term trusteeship. With Srinivasan and Singh's departure, TEDT now sits at the minimum threshold of three trustees permitted under its deed. An email sent to Noel did not elicit a response.

The vote is the latest and most visible expression of a fracture within Tata Trusts that has been widening since late 2025.

Established by former Tata Trusts chairman Ratan Tata in 2008, TEDT is perhaps the only trust within Tata Trusts that can support social projects in India and abroad. Most others, including SDTT and SRTT, can only undertake social causes in India.

CCI to probe Pernod Ricard, seven others

New Delhi: The Competition Commission has ordered a detailed probe against French spirits major Pernod Ricard and seven other entities for alleged cartelisation in the Indian-made foreign liquor market.

The seven entities that have come under the watchdog's lens are Indo Spirits, Pathway HR Solutions, Universal Distributors, Khao Gali, Bubbly Beverages, Shiv Associates and Organomix Ecosystems.

Ordering the investigation, the regulator said it is of prima-facie view that Pernord Ricard's restrictive conduct with its retailers/wholesalers, purportedly, to induce brand pushing and achieve higher market share in IMFL market in Delhi, falls within the purview of 'exclusive dealing agreement' under the Competition Act.

Such conduct violates the Act, according to a 26-page order, dated May 5, by the Competition Commission of India (CCI). The complaint was filed before the CCI in 2024.

CCI's Director General (DG) will carry out the investigation that will also look into the role of the persons/officers who were responsible for the conduct of the activities of such entities as well as individuals whose consent or connivance was involved during the time of the contraventions. AGENCIES

Novartis seeks to deepen India innovation play

Rupali.Mukherjee
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Swiss pharma major Novartis is sharpening its strategy in India as a pure-play innovator across core therapy segments, including cardiovascular, oncology and immunology, after divesting its stake in its listed arm earlier this year.

Significantly, India increasingly contributes to nearly every molecule that Novartis commercialises globally, and is moving further up the value chain, with early scientific discovery – Phase I studies, beginning to take shape in the country, Novartis India country president and MD Amitabh Dube told **TOI**.

> Our philosophy has been to transform into a pure-play innovative medicines company...Our commitment to India remains strong — we have over 9,000 employees, launched two new molecules last year and plan to launch one this year and two next year
>
>
>
> India will move up the value chain as demand for advanced technologies rises over time
>
> AMITABH DUBE | NOVARTIS INDIA COUNTRY PRESIDENT AND MD

In Feb, Novartis under a strategic review announced the sale of its 71% stake in its listed subsidiary, Novartis India, effectively exiting its legacy portfolio for about Rs 1,446 crore to a clutch of private equity investors, led by ChrysCapital. It retained its unlisted commercial arm, Novartis Healthcare, to drive its innovative medicines business in the country.

Typically, India largely serves as a development hub handling Phase II and III trials for MNCs, while early-stage research or innovation-intensive segments remain concentrated in developed markets.

Novartis recently initiated Phase I clinical research in Ahmedabad and will continue late-stage Phase II and III programmes across its core therapeutic areas, Dube said in his first interview, following the review.

A few of these global therapies, where India played a major role include Coartem Baby, the first antimalarial developed for infants, cardiovascular therapy Inclisiran (Sybrava), and a targeted radioactive therapy for prostate cancer Lutetium-177 vipivotide tetraxetan (Pluvicto).

Novartis operates one of its three global development hubs in India (Hyderabad and Mumbai), alongside Basel (Switzerland) and the US. For instance, the India Development Hub contributed in four critical areas in Coartem Baby – supporting clinical operations, pharmaceutical development, regulatory submissions and safety oversight.

"Our philosophy has been to transform into a pure-play innovative medicines company. It would not have been appropriate to retain these (legacy) brands without the right investments and focus. Our commitment to India remains strong—we have over 9,000 employees, launched two new molecules last year, and plan to launch one this year and two next year," added Dube.

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At Sea, In Trouble

India is uniquely placed to rescue stranded sailors in Hormuz. It must lead a multilateral repatriation mission

Day after day, day after day, We stuck, nor breath nor motion; As idle as a painted ship, Upon a painted ocean." Coleridge's haunting words are coming true for more than 20,000 seafarers, the vast majority of whom are Indians, stuck in Strait of Hormuz. Caught between the blockade and counter-blockade imposed by Iran and US, many are running out of food, fresh water, medicine, and emergency supplies. UN's International Maritime Organization has flagged the humanitarian crisis as unprecedented. Yet, neither warring parties, nor regional stakeholders, appear to be particularly concerned about sailors stranded at sea. On the contrary, both Tehran and Washington have been using ships and the seafarers as leverage.

Ships can't dock in Iranian ports under US blockade, while visa restrictions and logistics make docking at Arab ports unfeasible. Plus, since the whole stretch, from Hormuz to Gulf of Oman, has been converted into a quasi war zone, with ships and tankers being targeted by both Iran's IRGC and US navy, there is constant fear of death, aside from destruction of billions of dollars worth of cargo. Last week, US hit and disabled two tankers seeking to enter Iranian ports. Iran, meanwhile, reportedly seized a tanker, Ocean Koi, in Gulf of Oman.

Psychological pressure on seafarers in the region must be unbearable. There are reports of ship owners threatening sailors to stay onboard, through withheld salaries, and accusations of hijacking or sabotage. They have also refused to process sign-off and repatriation of ship crews – a right protected under international maritime law. With many of the 800-1,000 ships classified as Very Very Large Vessels, there are massive financial implications involved. Some owners, therefore, are pressuring sailors to make dangerous transit runs. Hitherto, 10 seafarers have been killed in attacks on shipping.

Solutions remain elusive. Iran wants to tax and charge ships for transiting Hormuz, but US is opposed to this. US's Project Freedom to escort ships out of the region was abruptly stopped last week, coinciding with reported Iranian strikes. Nonetheless, with most seafarers hailing from India, GOI has an added responsibility to rescue the sailors. It had done a fantastic job of rescuing stranded Indians from war theatres like Ukraine and Iraq. Given that New Delhi has good working relations with Tehran, Washington and all Gulf Arab capitals, it is uniquely placed to lead a multilateral humanitarian effort to rescue seafarers, with everyone's cooperation. In 21st century, seafarers stranded in Hormuz, needn't, and shouldn't, have to go through what Coleridge's cursed sailors did.

Good As Gold? Tough

Guineas, 6 LPG cylinders, cash. Vijay's plans are king's ransom. It'll make or break his political fortune & TN's

It's turning into a steeplechase of sorts for TN CM Vijay. Made to run to stack up the numbers, there's now the floor test to clear. Presuming he passes with flying colours, alas, still no time to catch his breath. For, on his debut, CM's staring at a mighty bill, where he'll likely spend a third of what TN earns, to service TVK's manifesto promises.

It's quite a list, estimated to cost ₹1L cr a year, while TN's total revenue is around ₹3.3L cr. The maths is simple. There's a gold guinea (8g) to new brides – that's about ₹1,22,700 current rate. A gold ring for every newborn – about 8.4L live births annually in TN. Schooling is incentivised – ₹15k to moms, of every child, every year, to ensure her kids don't drop out. So, a mother of three schoolgoers will receive ₹45k per year? There's plenty hard cash in flow – ₹2,500 for women (around 1.6cr), ₹4,000 to jobless graduates (around 7.5L), ₹15k to farmers (around 80L), ₹10k to farm labour, and on it goes. There's health insurance, loans and stipends aplenty – also for college-goers. Not a first, but this is particularly misdirected. For, state just ends up sponsoring education in pricey private colleges of appalling standards, which produce unemployable graduates. Why not, instead, fill the 40% faculty vacancies in state colleges?

A very generous manifesto – there's even MSP promised for fish – and much of it may be 'needed', but there's that little blip: Where will the money come from? TVK doesn't say. Gold's on a runaway trip, US-Israel-Iran's war is expected to continue on-off through the year. Given uncertainty of supply, six LPG cylinders a year are the stuff of dreams. An economic miracle if Vijay pulls it off – or else, he's looking at either empty coffers, or empty promises.

Keep the change

It's a constant, whether in décor or democracy

Anil Abraham

"It's time for change!" Kamala announced decisively. I looked up with alarm from the couch, where I was browsing the morning newspaper. I wondered if she was talking about recumbent husbands or incumbent politicians. She was blissfully uncaring of both, and was referring to the curtains that looked slightly worse for wear. "And while we are at it, let's make some other changes to the interiors. We could look for new sofas, get a new modular kitchen, modernise the bathrooms, with some bright tiles and fresh sanitaryware."

I am all for change, provided I'm not paying for it. In an attempt to block her move for radical change, I tried countering with the cliché that the more things change, the more they remain the same. But she was very determined that change is the only constant. And quickly clarified that she was referring to home interiors, not politics or the recent elections.

I tried deflecting to gentler remedies. Maybe if we ran the curtains through the washing machine, things would look brighter, and give a fresh perspective on the domestic scene. Home Minister was not impressed. "The entire fabric is in tatters – it needs more than a washing machine to clean up a curtain that has outlived its utility." As my children got ready to quietly leave the room, I tried taking an exit poll to pump up my numbers. But they refused to offer support, even from the outside. They were still recovering from Mother's Day on social media, and walked out humming, *Tujhe sab hai pata meri maa!* Mother knows everything.

I decided it was time to bring the curtains down on this discussion. Change was inevitable and I needed to accept facts. It was curtains for our existing drapes, and a fresh new approach to the décor had been elected unanimously. There was no point in postponing change, and I decided to be the change I wished to see.

Meanwhile, Blinkit Bhaiyya was at the doorstep with the day's groceries. He had gone home to vote and was back at his job within a week. I thought for a moment about the change in his quality of life – after the dance of democracy. He smiled gratefully, as I paid for my parcel and told him to keep the change.

Can Vijay Carry The Franchise?

Tamil Nadu has a non-Dravidian govt after six decades. But its new CM's campaign speeches have been exemplars of vacuity, we have few clues about how TVK will interpret voters' desire for change

AR Venkatachalapathy

Vijay's entire campaign leading up to the elections has been on an anti-DMK plank. Calling it 'a malign force' (*theeya sakthi*) and TVK's prime rival – he barely took the names of ADMK and BJP – Vijay swore 'to rip apart the mask of the Dravidian model' and expose the 'real face' of DMK.

Indeed, nearly 60 years after CN Annadurai assumed office in early 1967, Vijay has given Tamil Nadu its first non-Dravidian govt. He assumed office yesterday roaring, "New era of real, secular, social justice starts now." And in all this, the question that looms largest is, will the new govt sing a dirge to the Dravidian model or perform an encore?

Five years ago, in the weeks between the poll date and the declaration of the results of the 2021 Tamil Nadu assembly election, an academic book was launched amidst the second wave of the pandemic. Few would have wagered that a book published by a university press would dominate the political discourse of the state. Intriguingly titled *The Dravidian Model*, its subtitle, 'Interpreting the Political Economy of Tamil Nadu', provided the gloss.

Authored by two seasoned academics, A Kalaiyarasan and M Vijayabaskar of the Chennai-based research organisation, Madras Institute of Development Studies, *The Dravidian Model* was based on a solid body of secondary literature and new research. It argued the case for why Tamil Nadu topped the list of India's most developed states. Studies, at best, raise a storm in some academic teacup, gather dust in libraries, and cuddle up as footnotes in scholarly journals.

In 2021, DMK won the elections, and Stalin became CM. Rather than be overshadowed by his illustrious father, Stalin chose to reinvent himself. Proving pundits, critics and sceptics all wrong, he put together a core team of ideologically committed bureaucrats and began to champion 'the Dravidian model'.

The moniker caught on in no time, and became a shorthand for a model of development that combined economic growth with inclusivity. Following the demise of the towering figures of M Karunanidhi and J Jayalalithaa over the last decade, Stalin's govt gave a fillip to the model. Core lessons captured in the model came to be consciously implemented and expanded. Continuity by stealth was replaced by overt emulation.

For instance, Amma Unavagam, the heavily subsidised food canteen, even retained the moniker of DMK's arch political rival, Jayalalithaa. New welfare schemes were launched. Women travelled free on public buses. Schools provided breakfast to complement the midday meal. Every month, a thousand rupees landed in the bank accounts of women.

In the 2026 election, DMK fought on the strength of the Dravidian model, showcasing its putative achievements. This, however, was not without its ironies. Some key components of the model, such as the midday meal scheme, were inaugurated by ADMK under its founder MG Ramachandran, the film star-turned-politician whose heights Vijay aspires to scale. DMK's leaders and ideologues had even berated the 'freebie'. And it was only in 2006 that DMK became its champion.

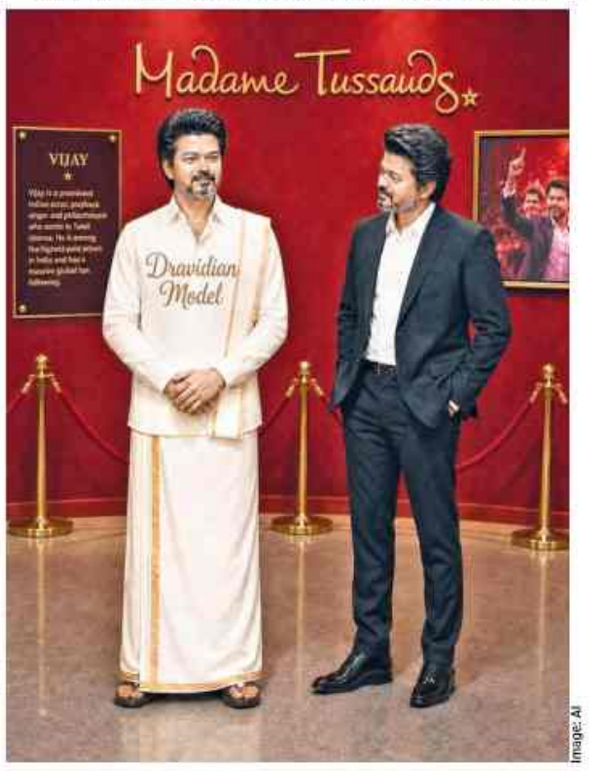


Image: AI

Curiously, ADMK, which has steered the state for most of the last 50 years, preferred to disown its achievements. Edappadi K Palaniswami consistently ran it down as a model of trickery ('*thanthira* model').

But coming back to whether Vijay's govt will sing a dirge to the Dravidian model or perform an encore, through the election campaign, at least, his political speeches have been exemplars of vacuity. No ideologue to represent TVK is visible on the horizon. How the party will interpret its voters' desire for change is not clear. Few clues can be discerned about the economic model or governance conventions that the new govt may follow.

Can one read something from the poll promises that Vijay has made? For a start, most of these only augment existing welfare measures. Increased direct cash transfers to women are in the offing, a measure that may be expanded to include men aged 65 years and above. Rather than the present free travel in city buses alone, women may ride any state-owned bus. Households have been promised six free gas cylinders annually. The irony of these promises, while talking of empty state coffers, seems not to have struck anyone.

The euphoria of victory will no doubt give the new govt breathing time. Then, the Dravidian model's core strengths will be tested. For a start, popular welfare has informed governance over the decades and for the bureaucracy, on which the neophyte govt will have to rely at least in the initial years, the substance of the Dravidian model is very much its common sense. Withdrawing from its overarching influence cannot happen anytime soon.

Structure of the economy, with manufacturing and services forming the core, can hardly change overnight. Even in the worst-case scenario, it can only stagnate. Geographical spread of the state's manufacturing sector cannot be reversed, nor can galloping urbanisation be stalled. 43% of India's women workforce in the formal sector, concentrated in Tamil Nadu, is unlikely to return to 'the great Indian kitchen'. Dynamism of intermediate castes and Dalits, high literacy levels, and increased health outcomes, can only spiral higher.

Chinks in the Dravidian model (questionable educational outcomes, unsustainable natural resource extraction, rapacity of rentier classes) do cry for redressal. But these hardly matter to any political party. On the political front, Vijay has already experienced the power of Union govt in the delayed investiture. Centre-state relationship is another litmus test.

Social scientists are poor forecasters. But if one can hazard a guess about the fate of the Dravidian model, what lies ahead may neither be a dirge nor an encore. In Wildean terms, it is likely to be a model that dare not speak its name.

The writer is co-editor, 'The Cambridge Companion to Periyar'

Will The Double Engine Model Help Suvendu? Yes & No

On the economic front, Bengal is now likely to get a lot of help from Centre. But carrying out some parts of BJP's ideological work, may face stiff resistance

Shikha Mukerjee

Formalities are over. The new govt with Suvendu Adhikari, a relative newcomer to BJP, as Bengal CM, and Dilip Ghosh, die-hard cadre, as number two, has been installed. Four others, representing vote banks that contributed to the capture of Bengal, and the ouster of Mamata Banerjee, have been sworn in as acknowledgement.

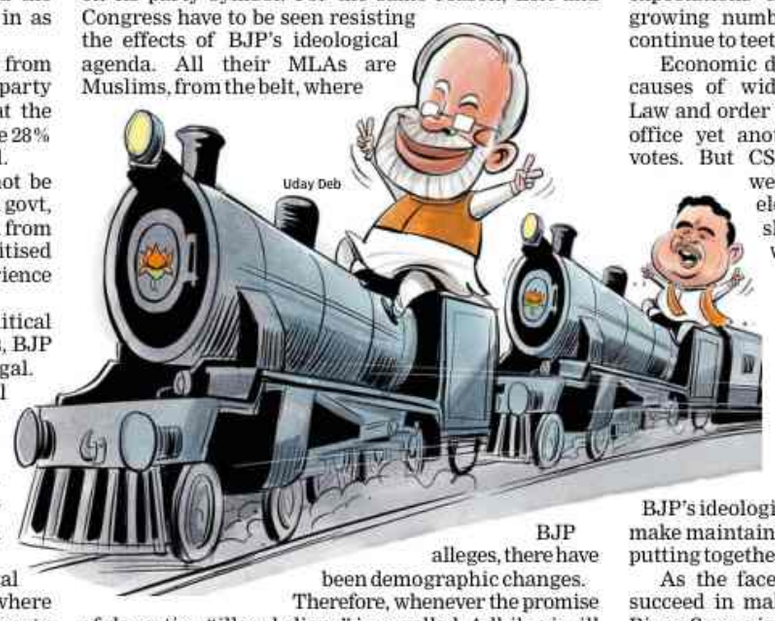
Of course, there are also vote banks missing from the first list, and their absence is significant. His party and Adhikari have made it perfectly clear that the victory owes nothing to do with Muslims, who are 28% of the population, and who live and vote in Bengal.

But over one-fourth of the population cannot be invisibilised. Erasing their presence and stake in govt, for the first time since 1937, will not remove them from politics in Bengal, especially as BJP has prioritised four issues that directly affect how Muslims experience the transition from a TMC govt.

In pursuit of its entwined ideological and political agendas of greater consolidation of Hindu votes, BJP is now estimated to have over 60% of these in Bengal. Otherwise, per EC data, it got over 45% of total votes cast. Basically, Adhikari is tasked with actively working to make space for a Hindu "jagaran", or revival, in the state. BJP has listed zero tolerance for "ghuspaithiyas", illegal, mostly Muslim, infiltrators, and clubbed the category of deleted voters, a significant number of whom are Muslims, with it.

It has also put legislating UCC in West Bengal on its must-do list. On a more mundane level, where Adhikari will have to deal with the fallout, the party wants to remove "all encroachments" by "illegal aliens". This could mean sending in bulldozers to demolish allegedly Muslim occupation of govt land and property. As the new CM must do what he has promised, which is to end "appeasement", it may affect how Muslims live and work in Bengal – spaces they occupy, jobs they do, and services they render.

It's not clear how these priorities will play out. Left has already hit the streets to say that there will be resistance against religious polarisation. Though Mamata is quieter now, evidently figuring out what she should do next, TMC has to engage on the Muslim question. It has 34 Muslim MLAs, out of the 80 who won on its party symbol. For the same reason, Left and Congress have to be seen resisting the effects of BJP's ideological agenda. All their MLAs are Muslims, from the belt, where BJP alleges, there have been demographic changes. Therefore, whenever the promise of deporting "illegal aliens" is unrolled, Adhikari will have to take on TMC, crushing which to the point of permanent decline is what BJP needs to do to settle in. He has to be seen as effective, without provoking large-scale confrontations, clashes and violence, which will require eroding TMC strength on the ground. How soon he starts on this task is connected to how quickly Mamata regains her leadership persona.



In a way, he's free of the burden of policy-making. Because the double-engine sarkar model does not give him elbow room to do his own thing, Adhikari's job as CM is both easier and more complicated. It's not clear how much autonomy he will enjoy to customise key elements of the double-engine template to blend with expectations of the new BJP converts, including growing numbers of emerging middle class, who continue to teeter on the brink of poverty.

Economic decline, BJP says, was among the root causes of widespread anti-incumbency sentiment. Law and order was another. Corruption and abuse of office yet another. Women's safety also mobilised votes. But CSDS-Lokniti's Sanjay Kumar, a very well-regarded research scholar on elections, did say recently that data shows Mamata received more votes from women than BJP did.

To arrest economic decline and improve Bengal's financial health, Adhikari has it relatively easy. In the sense that the double-engine sarkar model will no doubt help him out, given that Bengal is seen as BJP's jewel in the crown. On law and order, the new CM has a more complicated task. He can change individuals within the police, from top to bottom tiers, but BJP's ideological and political agendas are unlikely to make maintaining peace and order a simple matter, of putting together a non-partisan administration.

As the face of BJP in Bengal, Adhikari has to succeed in making himself indispensable. Himanta Biswa Sarma in Assam is the best comparison – he came from Congress and transformed BJP, by inducting powerful Congressmen, meaning people with strong support bases, into the party. In Bengal, BJP is a shiny new party. Keeping it tarnish- and scratch-free, is Adhikari's challenge.

Calvin & Hobbes

TODAY FOR "SHOW AND TELL," I REFUSE TO SHOW YOU WHAT I BROUGHT AND I REFUSE TO TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
IT'S A MYSTERY THAT WILL HAUNT YOU ALL YOUR MISERABLE LIVES.' YOU'LL NEVER, EVER KNOW WHAT I BROUGHT.' YOU CAN BEG AND PLEAD, BUT I'LL NEVER END YOUR TORMENT.'
I'LL CARRY MY SECRET TO THE GRAVE.' IT'S THE SHOW AND TELL THAT WAS NEVER SHOWN OR TOLD.' HA HA HA! AH HA HA HA HA.'
EVERYBODY WANTS THE SAME OLD THING.
PRINCIPAL
3/10

Sacred*space*

I become what I see in myself. All that thought suggests to me, I can do; all that thought reveals in me, I can become. This should be man's unshakable faith in himself, because God dwells in him.

Sri Aurobindo

Nietzsche And The Reinvention Of The Human

Jug Suraiya

If you were told that in a cycle of endless recurrence you'd live out your life exactly as it is in every aspect and every event, every pain and every joy, over and over again for all eternity, would the prospect fill you with elation or despair?

This was the challenge that Friedrich Nietzsche threw in the face of the age-old philosophical debate in the Western canon about free will vs determinism, to define what it means to be human.

Plato opted for free will, asserting that we ought to be guided by the Good, an eternal ideal, so as not to be held in the human bondage of emotion and desire. But wouldn't the diktat of the Good itself be a form of higher bondage, of determinism?

Two thousand years later, Kant would advocate free will as well, with the caveat that all our actions must be such that they should be of universal application, a proviso which afforded backdoor entry to determinism. He took the radical view that we are constrained always to tell the truth, even if that makes us accessory to murder.

In Vedantic teaching, the concept of karm – we make ourselves what we are through what we have done – sets a limit to free will through the consequences of our past deeds and misdeeds.

Beginning with his famous assertion that God is dead, science and secularism having undermined Christian dogma, Nietzsche attempted to devise a moral compass beyond the traditional polarity of good and evil.

Calling free will 'crass stupidity' invented by religious authoritarianism to guilt-trip humanity into the slave mentality of submission, he called for a revolutionary 'revaluation of values' dependent not on divine dispensation but on our own innate will to power, power not to dominate others but to dominate oneself, to achieve self-mastery and evolve into the Ubermensch (the Overman).

THE SPEAKING TREE

In his seminal 1883 work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which is an aphoristic prose poem rather than a philosophic treatise, Nietzsche outlined the three stages of the path to the reinvention of humanity: the Camel, burdened with imposed values; the Lion, fierce fighter for freedom; the Child, reborn as a life-affirming individual, a triumphant yea-sayer, with no hope of heaven, no fear of hell, prepared to endure the triumphs and tragedies of earthly life even in the face of an imagined eternity of endless recurrence.

As a young man, Zarathustra – the fictive name derived from Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism, one of the world's earliest religions – retreats into a mountain fastness and returns to the world of men to spread his revelatory message of a new way of thought and life for humanity to achieve the ultimate goal of the Ubermensch, not in the hereafter, but in the here and now.

This exaltation of the Ubermensch, hijacked and perverted by the Nazis, has been misunderstood in popular lore and caused Nietzsche to be traduced as a crypto-fascist, although he was a lifelong critic of National Socialism and anti-Semitism.

Besieged as the world is today by the mass madness of war along religious battle lines, perhaps we need to rediscover Nietzsche, if only to remind ourselves that what we call humanity is still a work in progress.

UGC deemed varsity reform may spur fee hike, redefine financing

The move could encourage private investment in higher education

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—Shane Bond | RR bowling coach

Bhuvi, Krunal swing it for RCB

Defending Champions Pull Off Last-Ball Thriller; MI And LSG Eliminated

Chitrangada.C@timesofindia.com

Raipur: Veteran pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar and all-rounder Krunal Pandya starred in tandem as Royal Challengers Bengaluru snapped their two-match losing streak with a thrilling two-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium here on Sunday.

Bhuvneshwar's incisive spell of 4/23 laid the foundation before Krunal's composed 73 guided the defending champions to a dramatic last-ball win that lifted them to the top of the points table. Chasing 168 for victory, RCB pulled off a win for the ages.

The defeat also knocked the Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants out of playoff contention.

Chasing 167, RCB stumbled early when Virat Kohli fell for a second successive duck in the opening over. Deepak Chahar then removed the in-form Devdutt Padikkal (12), while captain Rajat Patidar (8) also departed cheaply as RCB slumped to 47/3 at the end of the powerplay.

With the chase threatening to slip away, Krunal, who hasn't had many batting opportunities over the past couple of seasons, produced a calm and mature innings under pressure. The left-hander, who was promoted up the order, began cautiously before accelerating smartly, picking off boundaries against Will Jacks and AM Ghazanfar to keep the required rate in check.

Opener Jacob Bethell made 27 before falling, and Corbin Bosch's wicket-maiden in the 13th over briefly swung the momentum Mumbai's way. However, Krunal found an ally in Jitesh Sharma (18), who was slow off the blocks, but counter-attacked against Jasprit Bumrah and Bosch.

Bosch struck twice in successive deliveries to dismiss Jitesh and Tim David (0), leaving RCB wobbling again at 131/6 in 16 overs. But Krunal continued to hold firm despite battling cramps and smashed two massive sixes off Ghazanfar in the 18th over before departing for a crucial 73 off 46 balls. He was sent back off a brilliant acrobatic boundary line catch by Tilak Varma.

Bumrah's superb penultimate over left RCB needing 15 runs off the last over. Yet Bhuvneshwar had one final contribution left. After Romario Shepherd was dismissed, the seasoned pacer walked in and launched Raj Bawa for a maximum before Rasikh scampered back for the winning runs to seal a memorable last-ball victory.

Earlier, after RCB opted to bowl, Bhuvneshwar made an immediate impact on a surface offering assistance to seamers. He removed Ryan Rickelton (2) in the opening over before returning to dismiss Rohit Sharma (22) and stand-in skipper Suryakumar Yadav (0) in quick succession, reducing Mumbai to 28/3 inside three overs. Though Rohit briefly counter-attacked with two sixes off Josh Hazlewood, Bhuvneshwar's relentless accuracy ensured MI never settled. His superb powerplay figures of 3/17 restricted Mumbai to 53/3 after six overs.

Naman Dhir (47) and Tilak(57) revived the innings with an 82-run partnership for the fourth wicket. Dhir looked fluent before Rasikh Salam cleaned him up, while Tilak continued the recovery with a fighting half-century.

But Bhuvneshwar returned at the death to have the final say, knocking over Tilak in the 18th over to finish with excellent figures of 4/23 as Mumbai were restricted to 166/7.

CREIMAS

4/23
Bhuvneshwar Kumar has produced his best bowling performance vs Mumbai Indians, eclipsing the 3/21 at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on April 12, 2017. His first four-wicket haul vs MI is his fifth in the IPL. His tally includes two five-fors.

JUST LIKE OLD WINE: Bhuvneshwar Kumar again dished out a vintage powerplay performance for RCB vs MI in Raipur, getting the wickets of Rohit Sharma, Ryan Rickelton and Suryakumar Yadav

21 Number of wickets at an average of 15.28 in eleven matches recorded by Bhuvneshwar Kumar to become the first bowler to bag 20 wickets or more in this IPL. For the fourth time, he has captured 20+ wickets in an IPL season — the previous three instances being in 2014, 2016 & 2017 — all for Sunrisers Hyderabad.

4 Bhuvneshwar is the fourth bowler to take 20+ wickets in an IPL season four times. He has joined Yuzvendra Chahal (5 times), Lasith Malinga (four) & Jasprit Bumrah (four).

HOW THEY STAND

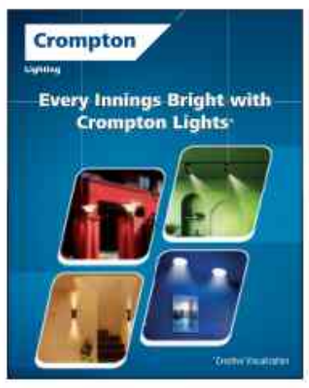
TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
RCB	11	7	4	0	1.103	14
SRH	11	7	4	0	0.737	14
GT	11	7	4	0	0.228	14
PBKS	10	6	3	1	0.571	13
CSK	11	6	5	0	0.185	12
RR	11	6	5	0	0.082	12
KKR	10	4	5	1	-0.169	9
DC	11	4	7	0	-1.154	8
MI	11	3	8	0	-0.585	6
LSG	11	3	8	0	-0.907	6

SCOREBOARD

Mumbai Indians: Ryan Rickelton c Patidar b Bhuvneshwar 2, Rohit Sharma c Jitesh b Bhuvneshwar 22, Naman Dhir b Rasikh 47, Suryakumar Yadav c Kohli b Bhuvneshwar 0, Tilak Varma b Bhuvneshwar 57, Will Jacks c Bethell b Shepherd 10, Raj Bawa c Patidar b Hazlewood 16, Corbin Bosch (not out) 5, Deepak Chahar (not out) 1.
Extras: (LB-3, W-3) 6. **Total** (7 wkts; 20 overs) 166
FoW: 1-4, 2-28, 3-28, 4-110, 5-132, 6-155, 7-161
Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-23-4, Josh Hazlewood 4-0-33-1, Rasikh Salam 4-0-41-1, Romario Shepherd 3-0-18-1, Krunal Pandya 3-0-26-0, Suyash Sharma 2-0-21-0.
Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Jacob Bethell c Tilak b Bosch 26, Virat Kohli c Bawa b Chahar 0, Devdutt Padikkal c Rickelton b Chahar 12, Rajat Patidar c Rickelton b Bosch 8, Krunal Pandya c Tilak b Ghazanfar 73, Jitesh Sharma c Dhir b Bosch 18, Tim David c Rickelton b Bosch 0, Romario Shepherd c Tilak b Bawa 4, Rasikh Salam (not out) 3, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 7. **Extras:** (LB-4,NB-1, W-11) 16
Total: (8 wkts; 20 overs) 167
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-24, 3-39, 4-94, 5-131, 6-131, 7-149, 8-157.
Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-33-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-20-0, Corbin Bosch 4-0-24-4, Will Jacks 2-0-13-0, AM Ghazanfar 3-0-32-1, Raj Bawa 3-0-39-1.

WAR CRY: Krunal Pandya (left) celebrates the win with Virat Kohli

"Discipline keeps me going. My physios help me remain in shape. I think everything depends on the wicket as well."
— BHUVNESHWAR KUMAR



CSK ride on Urvil & Overton to pip LSG

Neha.Surana@timesofindia.com

Chennai: Chennai Super Kings snapped an eight-year jinx at Chepauk on Sunday, and it took an unlikely hero, Urvil Patel, playing in place of the injured Ayush Mhatre, to script it.

Chasing 204 against Lucknow Super Giants, CSK completed their first 180-plus chase since 2018, powered by Urvil's astonishing 23-ball 65. Slotted at No. 3 after Sanju Samson's brisk 28 off 14, the 27-year-old turned the game on its head with a breathtaking burst.

His 13-ball half-century, joint-fastest in IPL history alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal, broke the back of the asking rate on a surface where the ball occasionally gripped. Urvil's assault ensured CSK raced to half the target inside seven overs.

The carnage began after a quiet start. Avesh Khan's over disappeared for 25 runs as Urvil hammered three sixes, shifting momentum instantly. Digvesh Rathi suffered a similar fate in the next over, conceding 25 as Urvil surged to 42 off just 10 balls.

With Chepauk roaring, Urvil took on Mohammed Shami, bringing up his fifty with a towering six, then revealing a note from his pocket that read, "This is for you, Papa."

His approach was uncomplicated but devastatingly effective, repeatedly targeting the midwicket arc. Seven of his eight sixes sailed there, as he relied on timing and brute power rather than innovation.

Though Shahbaz Ahmed eventually dismissed him and a dropped catch on 62 briefly prolonged the onslaught, the damage was already done. CSK still wobbled, 78 off 64 balls should have been routine, but Shivam Dube's late sixes sealed a five-wicket win.

The victory, CSK's third straight, lifted them to fifth with 12 points from 11 matches, though a significant net run rate boost eluded them.

Earlier, Josh Inglis had lit up Chepauk with a blistering 85 off 33 balls, propelling LSG to a record powerplay score of 91/1. But CSK hit back through Jamie Overton and Noor Ahmad, who tightened the screws on their rivals in the middle overs.

Overton struck twice in the 10th over, getting the wicket of Inglis, who was dismissed while playing the reverse scoop. A late push from Shahbaz Ahmed took LSG past 200, but under lights and against Urvil in full flow, even that proved insufficient.

Brief Scores: Lucknow Super Giants: 203/8 in 20 overs (Josh Inglis 85, Shahbaz Ahmed 43 not out; Jamie Overton 3/36, Anshul Kamboj 2/47) lost to **Chennai Super Kings: 208/5 in 19.2 overs** (Urvil Patel 65, Ruturaj Gaikwad 42; Digvesh Rathi 2/45) by five wickets and four balls to spare.

LR Shankar

Urvil Patel smashed eight sixes and two fours during his 23-ball 65 vs LSG at Chepauk

13 Urvil Patel, with a 13-ball fifty, has emulated an IPL record for the quickest half century. Yashasvi Jaiswal had scored a 13-ball half century during his innings of 98 not out off 47 balls for RR vs KKR at Eden Gardens, Kolkata on May 11, 2023.

77 Runs scored by Josh Inglis — the most by a LSG batter in the powerplay — the fourth highest by a batter in the powerplay in the IPL — the highest being 87 not out off 25 balls by Suresh Raina for CSK vs Punjab at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on May 30, 2014. Travis Head scored 84 not out off 26 balls for SRH vs DC at Delhi on April 20, 2024. DC's Jake Fraser-McGurk scored 78 not out off 24 balls vs MI at Delhi on April 27, 2024.
—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

Faltering Punjab Kings eye a reset in the hills

Win Against Delhi Capitals Can Rekindle Their Campaign After Suffering Three Successive Losses

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Dharamshala: Few cricketing venues appear as beautiful as Dharamshala. The noise softens, the air lightens, the mountains rise from impossible angles, and the game feels less industrial, more elemental.

With the Dhauladhar range standing like a painted wall behind the sightscreen, Punjab Kings will

IPL

hope the change in altitude also alters the direction of their season when they take on Delhi Capitals at the HPCA Stadium here on Monday.

The stadium sits in the lap of the mountains, framed by cedar slopes and low-drifting clouds that almost brush the floodlights. Even in May, evening games carry a chill. This week, the weather has felt heavier, with lingering mist, a sharper breeze, and rain in the forecast.

The pitch offers pace, carry and enough seam movement to keep quicks interested. But with short boundaries and a rapid outfield, once the ball stops moving, stroke players revel.

Matches here often become high-scoring affairs. Punjab hammered 236/5 against Lucknow Super Giants at this venue last season, proof that even mountain air cannot contain modern T20 hitting. Punjab need to find that sort of freedom again.

Not long ago, they looked the most complete side in the competition, six wins in seven matches, suggesting a team finally at ease. Then came the slide. Losses to Rajasthan Royals, Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad have exposed cracks that now appear wider.

The timing is the bigger concern. Momentum in T20 can vanish as quickly as the sun behind the Dhauladhar peaks, and Punjab have lost theirs just before the business end.

Their catching in Hyderabad was ragged enough to turn the game. Arshdeep Singh and the seamers have leaked runs at key moments. Most significantly, the early thrust from Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh has slowed.

Through it all, Shreyas Iyer has remained the calmest presence. His batting has held shape, and Punjab will need that composure in the coming week. Three remaining home games — against Delhi, MI and RCB — could define whether this season becomes another near-miss or something more.

If Punjab are anxious, Delhi look drained. Five defeats in six games have pushed them down the table, and familiar questions are being posed. Their batting lacks certainty, unable to force tempo once early wickets fall. Kuldeep Yadav's quiet season has dulled their middle-overs edge, while the fielding has been untidy.

Even Mitchell Starc's return carries a sense of delay, as if Delhi are trying to rediscover themselves after the tournament has moved on. They remain alive, but only mathematically and need a lot of things to go in their favour to advance.

Anindya Chattopadhyay

PBKS captain Shreyas Iyer (left) during training on the eve of their game vs DC in Dharamshala

WEATHER
14°C

NUMBERS GAME

4 Both teams have won two games each at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala. Punjab Kings won by 29 runs on May 15, 2011 and by seven runs on May 16, 2013. Delhi Capitals won by six wickets on May 19, 2012 and by 15 runs on May 17, 2023.

152 KL Rahul's unbeaten knock off 67 balls at Delhi on April 25, 2026, remains the highest individual knock in matches involving DC & PBKS. It also remains the highest score in a losing cause in the IPL.

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

GALLERY

NEERU-VIVAAN CLINCH BRONZE

Neeru Dhanda and Vivaan Kapoor signed off with a bronze medal in the trap mixed team event as India ended its campaign at the ISSF World Cup Shotgun on a positive note in Almaty, Kazakhstan on Sunday. The medal was the first ISSF World Cup podium finish for Neeru and Vivaan in the Olympic event and India's second since mixed team trap was added to the Olympic programme last year.

Indian U-15 boys enter six finals: India's U-15 boys delivered a strong showing in the semifinals of the Asian Boxing U15 Championships, with six pugilists advancing to the finals and seven others settling for bronze medals in Tashkent on Sunday. In the 33kg category, Yash Kumar registered a dominant 5:0 victory over Kiyan Iqbal of UAE to advance to the final. Sastha Vasanth Ashok Kumar (37kg) also secured a win against Aziretali Sanzharbekov of Kyrgyzstan.

Yuvraj has late stumble: Yuvraj Sandhu carded a round of even par 72 after being well placed around the turn in the third round at the Estrella Damm Catalunya Championship on the third day in Barcelona. He dropped a double bogey and a bogey on the back nine to finish at 72. With a total score of 4-under par (68-72-72) Sandhu is placed T-46.

Blasters beat Sporting 3-1: Kerala Blasters FC produced a dominant second half display to secure a 3-1 victory against Mohammedan Sporting, extending their unbeaten run to five matches ISL in Kochi on Sunday.

Prizmic in last 16: Dino Prizmic followed up knocking out Novak Djokovic from the Italian Open by beating France's Ugo Humbert 6-1, 7-5 on Sunday to reach the last 16 in Rome. Prizmic had to qualify for the main draw but the Croatian player looks like he could be a contender after another brilliant display of power and precision on clay.

SAI suspends boxing trials, CWG & AG selection in chaos

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New Delhi: Indian boxing has descended into administrative turmoil in a year where the focus should have been on preparing for two major multisport events — the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Instead, the sport is now mired in a bitter standoff between the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), leaving the country's elite boxers uncertain about their future and selection prospects.

TOI EXCLUSIVE

The latest flashpoint came on Sunday when SAI directed the BFI to halt the proposed assessment tests — effectively the final selection trials for the CWG and Asian Games squads — until further orders. The trials, originally scheduled from May 11 to 15 and later shortened to May 11-13 at the NS NIS Patiala, now stand suspended.

The move has intensified the growing conflict between the two governing bodies over selection policies, evaluation criteria, the composition of the selection committee, and the empanelment of coaches and support staff. While SAI has questioned the transparency and fairness of the BFI's proposed evaluation system, the federation has maintained that all procedures had been shared with and approved by SAI during the Annual Calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC) meetings.

However, the SAI remains unconvinced.

In a communication sent by the office of TOPS CEO NS Johal to the BFI leadership on Sunday, the SAI raised several objections regarding the federation's assessment framework. According to the mail, the SAI pointed out that the "details regarding the evaluation process and matrix proposed for technical and tactical aspects have not been clarified to date." It further sought details of the High Performance Unit (HPU), including the names, qualifications and credentials of those who would be involved in evaluating athletes during the national camp.

The communication also questioned the proposed list of coaches and support staff identified for the camp, the criteria used by the BFI Coaches Commission for their selection, and whether any coach associated with the national camp was also part of the selection or assessment process — something SAI had earlier cautioned against to avoid favouritism and conflict of interest.

Tejas takes 110m hurdles gold

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Chennai: The Indian Athletics Series 6 meet here saw three athletes come agonisingly close to rewriting the national records. In the men's 110m hurdles, current NR holder

ATHLETICS

Tejas Shirse blazed to victory in 13.43 seconds, narrowly ahead of M Krishik, who finished second in 13.44s. The high jump pit, meanwhile, witnessed Aadarsh Ram scale 2.27m to claim top honours with a standout effort. For Tejas, this was the first meet after a four-month injury break. Murali Sreeshankar from Kerala registered of 8.04m in the men's long jump. The 27-year-old committed three fouls and felt that the heat ate away all his energy.

Pole vaulter Baranica Elangovan, who broke the national record twice this year, leapt 4.10m to secure the pole position. Meanwhile, Krishna Jayasankar threw the iron ball to 16.96m to cross the Asian Games qualifying mark and in discus throw she finished second (53.37m). Nidhi Rani at 58.82m in discus breached both the Asian and CWG qualifying marks.

Mehidy helps B'desh take lead

FIRST TEST

Mehidy Hasan Miraz claimed five wickets to give Bangladesh a slender lead after Pakistan debutant Azan Awais hit 103 on a rain-hit third day of the first Test on Sunday. Pakistan made 386 all out in response to Bangladesh's first innings total of 413 in Dhaka.

Bangladesh closed the day on 7/0 in their second innings to increase their lead to 34 runs, after bad light ended play with Mahmudul Hasan Joy unbeaten on two and Shadman Islam yet to score. The left-handed Azan, who resumed on 85, completed his hundred off 153 balls. The pitch offered more assistance to the spinners when play resumed and Mehidy exploited the conditions to perfection, with Pakistan bowled out in 100.3 overs. Mehidy, who bowled 38 overs of his off-spin, was rewarded for his patience.

Brief scores: Bangladesh: 413 & 7/0 in 1.5 overs vs Pakistan (o/n: 179/1) 386 all out in 100.3 overs (Azan Awais 103, Abdullah Fazal 60, Salman Agha 58, Mohammad Rizwan 59; Mehidy Hasan Miraz 5-102, Taskin Ahmed 2-70, Taijul Islam 2-46). A FP

'Heading in a good direction'

TWO-TIME OLYMPIAN DEEPIKA KUMARI SAYS SHE'S ON TRACK AFTER HER 12TH WORLD CUP MEDAL

▶ Continued from page 1

Recurve archer Simranjeet Kaur was unfortunate to miss out on an individual medal after losing her semifinal and bronze medal playoff match later in the day.

"This win is important before the Asian Games as the women defeated South Korea and China, the two powerhouses in this tournament," former Olympian Rahul Banerjee told TOI. Banerjee, who has taken over as a coach, is happy with the team's scores. "What pleased me more is that they have shot 57, 58 almost consistently throughout the tournament. It is very significant."

The team of Zhu Jingyi, Huang Yuwei and Yu Qi, who all made their World Cup debuts only last year, has been in tremendous form this season having won gold in Stage I at Puebla, Mexico.Olympian Deepika Kumari picked up her 12th World Cup medal thereby matching compound archer Jyothi Surekha Vennam for the most number of World Cup titles for India. She has been part of all the seven World Cup titles that the Indian recurve women's teams have won over the years.

Deepika led from the front shooting last in the order. It calmed the nerves of her less experienced teammates.

After winning the opening set (54-53), India slipped in the second, losing 52-55, helping China to restore parity. The hosts took the lead 4-2 with a 57-56 win in the third but allowed India to come back in the match losing the fourth set from a winning position 53-54.

China again gave India the space with an 8-9-9 score in the shoot-off and Kumari needed to shoot at least a nine to give India their first World Cup recurve women's team gold since Paris 2021. The four-time Olympian did not disappoint.

(FROM LEFT) ANKITA BHAKAT, DEEPIKA KUMARI AND KUMKUM MOHOD

"I'm heading in a good direction," a relieved Deepika, who averaged a brilliant 9.22, said. However, the 31-year-old is still not happy with her show. "I'm still struggling. I'm trying to gather myself to do better and better, and I hope for the best," she stated.

The victory carried even greater significance because of the path India took to the title, defeating 10-time Olympic champions South Korea 5-1 in the semifinals before overcoming a charged home crowd and a spirited Chinese side in the summit clash.

Against Korea, India looked fearless. They took the sets 58-55, shared the second at 57-57, and sealed the contest 57-55, registering only the fourth victory over the Korean women's recurve team in international competition.

The final challenge against China tested the team's resolve. Kumkum, competing in her first World Cup medal event, emerged as one of the stories of the tournament. "I felt really ecstatic. What kept me going was not thinking about the opponent, but focusing on my own game," she said. "To stay focused during big events, I do a lot of breathing work and meditation."

Kumkum also credited her senior teammates for helping her remain composed in crunch moments. "They told me, 'You just shoot and don't worry.' I learned a lot from them and stayed calm throughout the matches."

Veteran Deepika Kumari's presence once again proved invaluable, while Ankita Bhakat highlighted the team's unity as the defining factor behind the triumph. "When one of us missed, the others covered for her. That understanding helped us," Ankita said. She also revealed how the team consciously maintained communication during competitions to avoid pressure building internally.

Perhaps that was India's biggest strength in Shanghai, three archers shooting not as individuals, but as one unit.

On a day filled with tension, roaring crowds and razor-thin margins, India's recurve archers stood tall, fearless and united. In Shanghai, they did not just win a gold medal they announced that Indian women's archery belongs among the world's elite once again.

Abhinav fights back to clinch title

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chethan Sivakumar

CHAMPIONS: Tanvi Patri (left) & Abhinav Garg with their spoils

Bengaluru: Karnataka's Abhinav Garg and Odisha's Tanvi Patri clinched the U-19 boys' and girls' singles titles in contrasting fashion at the All India junior ranking badminton tournament here on Sunday. Abhinav mounted a comeback to defeat Telangana's Gnana Dattu TT 8-21, 23-21, 22-20, while Tanvi shocked Karnataka's top seed Shaina Manimuthu 21-17, 21-8.

The first game was a disappointment for Abhinav as Gnana dominated the rallies and grabbed a 1-0 lead.

However, the momentum shifted in the second game as Abhinav bounced back strongly and scored the opening point. Both players matched each other throughout the game, forcing a deuce

JR BADMINTON

after Gnana briefly gained the advantage. Abhinav eventually held his nerve to seal the game at 23-21 and forced the boys' final to a decider.

The final game mirrored the previous one, with Abhinav again scoring first. Gnana pulled ahead midway, but Abhinav steadily closed the gap, forced another deuce, and claimed victory.

In the doubles event, Karnataka's Pavan S and Punith S emerged champions.

In the girls' final, Shaina started on a strong note, taking the lead before Tanvi, seeded fifth, caught up.

The players were neck-and-neck in the first game, with long rallies and composure in defending each other's attacking shots. However, Tanvi gradually gained momentum and won the opening game. In the second game, she dominated with precise dribbles and game awareness to bag the title.

Home shuttler Diya Bheemaiah and her partner Baruni Arshwal from Haryana won the doubles crown, while Punith and Aditi Deepak Raj, representing the hosts, annexed the mixed doubles title.

Results (Finals): Boys: Singles: 4-Abhinav Garg (Kar) bt 14-Gnana Dattu (Tel) 8-21, 23-21, 22-20; **Doubles:** Pavan S/Punith S (Kar) bt Aanayan Borah(Asm)/Bjorn Jaison(Ker) 21-19, 21-10. **Girls: Singles:** 5-Tanvi Patri (Odi) bt 1-Shaina Manimuthu (Kar) 21-17, 21-8; **Doubles:** Diya Bheemaiah (Kar)/ Baruni Arshwal (Har) bt Anushkaa Jennifer/ Dheeshitha Singha (TN) 21-10, 22-20. **Mixed doubles:** Punith S/ Aditi Deepak Raj (Kar) bt Sailo Sainunmawia (Miz)/Rishita Pandey (Tel) 17-21, 21-16, 21-17. **— Jia Khosla**

Trossard keeps Arsenal dreaming

London: Arsenal cleared arguably the most dangerous remaining obstacle in their path to the Premier League title by the skin of their teeth as Leandro Trossard's late goal secured a dramatic 1-0 win at West Ham United to restore their five-point lead on Sunday.

EPL

The visitors were living dangerously at the London Stadium but Trossard guided home a low shot from Martin Odegaard's pass in the 83rd minute to spark delirium amongst the Arsenal fans and despair in the home ranks.

ON OUR WAY: Leandro Trossard (right) celebrates after scoring

Arsenal rode their luck and survived a huge scare deep in stoppage time as West Ham substitute Callum Wilson had an equaliser ruled out for a foul after a long VAR review.

Victory put Arsenal a step closer to a first Premier League title since 2004 and they will be crowned champions if they win their last two games at home to Burnley and away to Crystal Palace on the final day.

Arsenal have 79 points from 36 games with Manchester City, who have a game in hand, on 74.

For West Ham it was a bitter pill to swallow as defeat left them staring at relegation and they could find themselves four points from the safety zone with two games left if Tottenham Hotspur beat Leeds United on Monday.

Aston Villa's Champions League push stalled as they suffered a European hangover in a 2-2 draw with already-relegated Burnley. Everton's dreams of qualifying for Europe suffered a setback as substitute Jean-Philippe Mateta rescued Crystal Palace with a late equaliser in a 2-2 draw, and Nottingham Forest are nearly safe from relegation after a late 1-1 draw with Newcastle United. REUTERS

BARCELONA COACH FLICK'S FATHER DIES AHEAD OF CLASICO

Barcelona: Barcelona coach Hansi Flick's father has died, the club said in a statement on Sunday, hours before their top-of-the-table clash with Real Madrid in LaLiga. The 61-year-old German coach has informed the club that he will be in the dugout during the home game with second-placed Real, Marca reported. "FC Barcelona and the entire blaugrana family wish to send all our love to Hansi Flick after the passing of his father. We share in your sorrow and our thoughts are with you and your family during this difficult time," Barcelona posted on X said.

Karan to lead home challenge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karan Singh will lead India's challenge as the Karnataka Open main draw gets underway at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium on Monday. Seeded sixth, Karan faces Japan's Kokoro Isomura in one of the key opening round matches as Indian

KARNATAKA OPEN

players look to make an impact in a strong international field.

Top seed Keegan Smith of the United States begins his campaign against a qualifier, while second seed Hamish Stewart takes on Australia's Omar Jasika. Third seed Petr Bar Biryukov faces a qualifier and fourth seed Philip Sekulic meets India's Digvijaypratap Singh.

Six qualifying matches have been scheduled on Monday, followed by the main draw, which will witness three Indians in action.

Indian wildcard Dev Javia will meet Serbian fifth seed Ognjen Milic, while another wildcard, Maan Kesharwani, has been drawn against Czech player Dominik Palan. Sidharth Rawat will open his campaign against Thailand's seventh seed, Maximus Jones. Among the other Indians in the competition, SD Prajwal Dev faces Australia's Joshua Charlton, while wildcard Kriish Tyagi will face a qualifier.

Justina wears crown

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Tumakuru: Top seed Justina Mikulskyte was crowned champion of the Tumakuru Open ITF W35 on Sunday, though the Lithuanian would have preferred to win the title under different circumstances after opponent Zuzanna Pawlikowska retired injured after the opening game of the final.

Pawlikowska, who had already withdrawn from the doubles final on Saturday because of a shoulder injury, showed remarkable determination to take the court for the singles summit clash.

However, the Polish player lasted only a few minutes before the injury forced her to retire, bringing an abrupt

ITF W35

end to the contest between the tournament's top two seeds. Along with the trophy, the Lithuanian earned a winner's cheque of $4,860 and collected 35 valuable WTA ranking points.

Aquastic wins Mother's Day Trophy

Bengaluru: Rank outsider Aquastic from trainer Sulaiman Attaollahi's yards, ridden by Yash Narredu, won the Mother's Day Trophy at the summer races here on Sunday. Hot favourite Sunshine, trained by Irfan Ghatala, followed the winner home.

1. The Royal Challenge Plate - 1500M: Makoto 1, Agape 2, Dr. Colchester 3, Double Scotch 4, 5l, 5-1/2l, 1-1/4l. T: 1:34.87. Tote: Rs 25 (W). 11, 10, 46 (P). Fc: Rs 39. Q: Rs 19. Shp: Rs 25. Thp: Rs 133. Trinalla: Rs 1269 & 960. Exacta: Rs 4008 & 890. **2. The Razeen Plate (Div II) - 1400M:** Refined Aggression 1, Dr Ash 2, Agrador 3, My Solitaire 4, 10-1/2l, 4l, 8-3/4l. T: 1:25.44. Tote: Rs 13 (W). 11, 15, 12 (P). Fc: Rs 119. Q: Rs 113. Shp: Rs 55. Thp: Rs 47. Trinalla: Rs 136 & 29. Exacta: Rs 1357 & 953. **3. The Agumbe Plate - 1200M:** Senor Cherie 1, True Punch 2, Felisa 55 Pavan 3, La Mcqueen, Not Run: Silicon Star. 3l, 3/4l, Shd. T: 1:13.47. Tote: Rs 32 (W). 16, 17, 14 (P). Fc: Rs 109. Q: Rs 52. Shp: Rs 51. Thp: Rs 47. Trinalla: Rs 244 & 105. Exacta: Rs 4095 & 1504. **4. The Mother's Day Trophy -1500M:** Aquastic 1, Sunshine 2, Maana 3, Storm Shadow 4, 3-1/2l, 3/4l, Lnk. T: 1:31.19. Tote: Rs 140 (W). 23, 10, 15 (P). Fc: Rs 310. Q: Rs 49. Shp: Rs 38. Thp: Rs 39. Trinalla: Rs 463 & 229. Exacta: Rs 2448 & 1648. **5. The Capricorn Stud Plate - 1300M:** Efficacy 1, Lux Aeterna 54 P. Trevor 2, Promiseofthefuture 56.5 Pavan 3, Victoria Doresaani 54 L. Alex Rozario 4, All Ran. 4-1/4l, 3/4l, 2l. T: 1:18.90. Tote: Rs 23 (W). 13, 10, 10 (P). Fc: Rs 80. Q: Rs 44. Shp: Rs 30. Thp: Rs 39. Trinalla: Rs 118 & 45. Exacta: Rs 497 & 386. **6. The Razeen Plate (Div I) - 1400M:** Prince Of Wales 1, Glorious Strides 57.5 Darshan R.N 2, Valiant Stream 59.5 Akshay Kumar 3, El Rey 62 P. Trevor 4, Not Run: Unforgettable Star. Hd, 5l, 9l. T: 1:25.30. Tote: Rs 37 (W). 11, 12, 11 (P). Fc: Rs 316. Q: Rs 116. Shp: Rs 37. Thp: Rs 46. Trinalla: Rs 271 & 77. Exacta: Rs 550 & 281. **Jackpot:** Rs 10049. **Runner-up:** 946; **Mini Jackpot :** Rs 8090; **First Treble:** Rs 174. **Second Treble:** Rs 186. TNN

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Aryna Sabalenka's French Open preparations suffer a setback following a third-round defeat by Sorana Cirstea at the Italian Open

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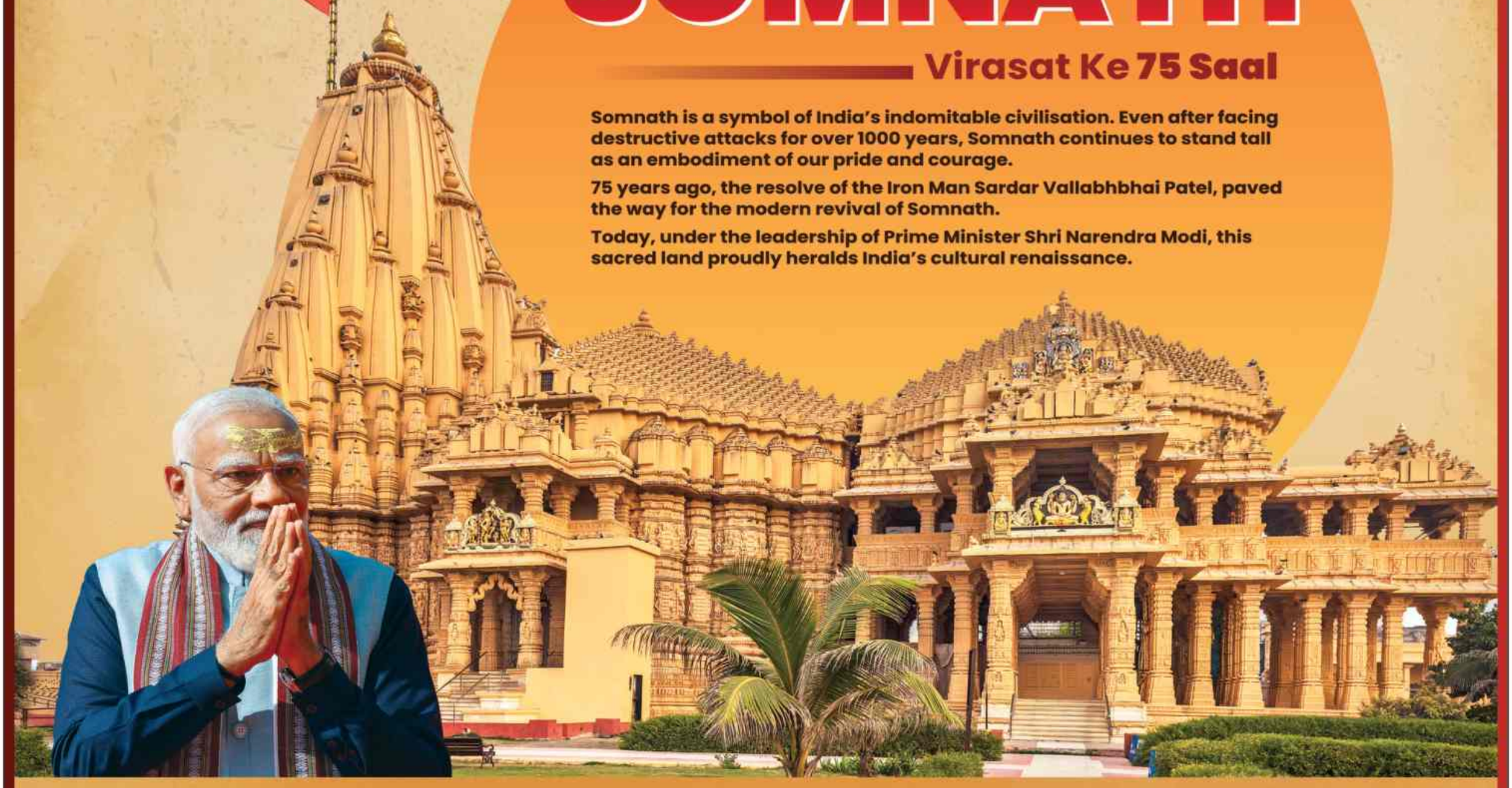

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SALLY FIELD REVEALS ACTING LEGEND JACK NICHOLSON HELPED HER RESET CAREER AFTER SHE HIT A ROADBLOCK

POP ICON RIHANNA UNVEILS A NEW TATTOO INSPIRED BY ARTWORK CREATED BY HER THREE CHILDREN WITH RAPPER A$AP ROCKY

THERE IS NOTHING SO PATIENT, IN THIS WORLD OR ANY OTHER, AS A VIRUS SEARCHING FOR A HOST.
— MIRA GRANT

Strait talk: Iran sends reply to US peace plan

Tehran Mum On Despatch Details

Iran submitted its response to the latest US proposal to end 10 weeks of war as a series of incidents continues to threaten a shaky ceasefire.

The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency reported on the latest response without giving any further details, and Tehran hasn't yet given any public indication it would accept Trump's plan. Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif confirmed that Iran has conveyed its response to a US proposal.

Trump proposed that Iran permit passage via the Strait of Hormuz and Washington end its blockade on Iranian ports in the next month. The two sides would still need to negotiate later a deal over Iran's nuclear programme.

Trump: US would need two weeks to hit all Iran targets

US President Donald Trump has said in an interview aired Sunday it would only take two weeks to hit "every single target" in Iran, adding that the Islamic republic was "militarily defeated." In the interview with independent journalist Sharyl Attkisson, recorded last week, he also called Nato a "paper tiger" and accused Washington's allies of failing to assist in the campaign against Tehran.

via Reuters

The damaged stern of a bulk carrier (see left) operated by South Korean shipper HMM, after it was struck by two unidentified objects on May 4 while stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, in this handout picture released by South Korean foreign ministry on Sunday

Trump on Sunday accused Iran of "playing games" and laughing at America for decades, but said it soon would be made to stop.

Iran warns France, UK of 'immediate response'

Iran warned Britain and France on Sunday that its armed forces would launch "a decisive and immediate response" to any warships being sent to the Strait of Hormuz, after Paris and London dispatched vessels to the region. "We remind them that both in times of war and in times of peace, only Iran can establish security in this strait," deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi posted on X.

UAE & Kuwait report intercepting drones

Despite the ceasefire in place since April 8, a drone strike on Sunday briefly set a cargo vessel ablaze off Qatar in the Persian Gulf, marking the latest shipping attack. The UAE and Kuwait, both of which have come under attack from Iran in the past two months, said Sunday they had intercepted hostile drones. BLOOMBERG, AFP, AP

Israel operated from Iraq's Najaf desert during war: Reports

Israeli forces established a makeshift base using an old airstrip in Iraq's desert during the war against Iran, two security officials told AFP on Sunday, confirming The Wall Street Journal report.

Early in the war, which was ignited by joint US-Israeli attacks on Iran on Feb 28, the troops were detected in the Najaf desert in the country's southwest and clashed with Iraqi forces, killing one soldier and wounding two others.

The security official said "Israeli forces established a base in an abandoned airstrip, built by Saddam Hussein, in the Najaf desert".

"There are no longer forces there, but they may have left equipment," he said, adding that the Israeli operation "was in coordination with the US". It was unclear how long the forces were there or what their mission was.

Reports of foreign troops in the desert emerged early in the war after a shepherd reported military activity.

On Saturday, the Wall Street Journal reported that "Israel set up a clandestine military outpost in the Iraqi desert to support its air campaign against Iran", quoting people familiar with the matter including US officials. The report said that "Israel built the installation, which housed special forces and served as a logistical hub, with the knowledge of the US". The Israeli military is yet to comment.

Following the WSJ report, an Iraqi spokesperson referred to a statement issued on March 5. At the time, Qais al-Mohamadawi, Iraq's deputy commander of joint operations, had told state media that Iraq protested to the US-led anti-jihadist coalition stationed in the country about an air raid in Najaf. He said after receiving reports of "individuals or movement in the Najaf" desert, Iraq's military sent a force to investigate. The troops came under heavy aerial fire, leaving one soldier dead and two others wounded. Reinforcements later searched the area, but "did not find anything", Mohamadawi said. "No foreign troops were authorised to be in that location."

Another security official said there were "indications that the operation involved an Israeli technical team under US military protection". AFP

Iran war is 'not over': Netanyahu

Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium must be "taken out" before the US-Israeli war against Iran can be considered over, Israeli PM Netanyahu said. "There's still enrichment sites that have to be dismantled," he told CBS's "60 Minutes" programme. "You go in and you take it out," he said. AFP

Ukraine, Russia report attacks on day 2 of truce

Ukraine and Russia accused each other of multiple attacks on civilians Sunday, the second day of what was supposed to have been a three-day truce ordered by Trump.

Trump announced the ceasefire on Friday, saying the two sides had agreed to stop all "kinetic" warfare for a three-day period starting Saturday. Despite a lull in air raids, both sides reported multiple civilian casualties.

Russian strikes on eastern Ukraine injured at least nine people, while Ukrainian strikes on Russia's Belgorod border region injured four others, officials on both sides said. AFP

In a 1st, N Korea troops march in Victory parade

Moscow: In a first, North Korean troops marched in Russia's Victory Day military parade held in Moscow on Saturday. They were seen marching in formation through the Red Square while carrying the North Korean national flag and a banner marking Russia's Victory Day, which commemorates the Soviet victory over Germany in World War II. IANS

Non-binary Indian on student visa elected to Scottish Parliament

Naomi Canton

A non-binary transgender Indian and former PhD student, born in Tamil Nadu, has become the first person to be elected as a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) despite being a foreign citizen who does not have a permanent visa to live in the UK.

Indian national **Q Manivannan** won the Edinburgh & Lothians East seat on Friday for the Scottish Greens, also becoming one of the first two transgender MSPs ever elected to Holyrood. They told supporters: "My name is Dr Q Manivannan, I am a transgender Tamil immigrant, my pronouns are they/them."

Their election has sparked controversy. "Indian migrant Dr Q Manivannan, who arrived in Britain on a student visa, is now a politician in Scotland pushing for the breakup of Britain," said Migration Watch.

Manivannan, will now get an annual salary of £77k (Rs 99 lakh) despite not having the right to work full-time.

The MSP is crowdfunding £2,089 to raise money for the graduate visa which will allow them to remain a further three years.

Manivannan said they come from a lower-caste background in Tamil Nadu and compared the "strong resistance tones" of Tamil Nadu to Scotland. They said they joined the Greens because of its support for Palestine. According to the Daily Telegraph, they unfollowed Auschwitz on social media and defended the defacement of posters of Israeli hostages.

They are now on a student visa which allows part-time work. Last year, the SNP govt introduced legislation to allow non-UK citizens to stand for Parliament if they had leave of any type, including a short-term study visa. Previously ILR was required.

They studied liberal arts and humanities at OP Jindal Global University in Delhi before moving to Scotland in Sep 2021 to study at the University of St Andrews.

A Scottish Greens spokesman said: "Q is on a valid visa with the right to work and live in Scotland, and is a Commonwealth citizen."

Iran denies reports of oil leak near Kharg Island export hub

Dubai: Iran's Oil Terminals Company denied reports of an oil leak near Kharg Island on Sunday, said state media, after satellite imagery this week appeared to show a large slick west of the country's oil export hub in the Gulf.

The company's chief executive said inspections had found no evidence of leaks from storage tanks, pipelines, loading facilities or tankers operating near the island. He added that the Marine Emergency Mutual Aid Centre, a regional marine pollution body, had also reported no sign of leakage in the area.

Conservationists assess damage to heritage sites

As fears of renewed conflict hang over Iran, conservationists are shoring up battered historic sites and taking stock of the damage caused by the war with the United States and Israel, though experts warn some repairs could take years.

At Golestan Palace, a defining cultural landmark in central Tehran, shattered mirrors, broken doors and debris from ornate ceilings now lie scattered across parts of the site after shockwaves from strikes on the capital.

Initial estimates suggest work at the site could cost around $1.7 million, though the figure could rise following a full assessment.

Other affected Unesco-listed sites include Chehel Sotoun Palace and the Masjed-e Jame mosque in Isfahan, as well as the prehistoric sites of the Khorramabad Valley. Beyond the listed sites, the war affected at least 140 culturally and historically significant locations across Iran. AFP

White House to turn into UFC cagefight arena on June 14

Washington: It has been a place of political intrigue and welcomed world leaders, but the White House, on June 14, will witness a clash of titans in an octagon-shaped cage as it hosts Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) bouts on the South Lawn.

The bouts are part of the 250th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the US. Last week, Trump unveiled a rendering of the octagonal cage surrounded by thousands of spectators with the White House standing tall in the background.

The 5000-seat makeshift arena will be built on the sprawling South Lawn, which is usually the venue to welcome leaders on a state visit to the US and also used by the President to board the Marine One helicopter for his travels. "I think it's going to be the biggest event we've ever had. I mean, the White House doesn't really do athletic events, and these are all the greatest champions," Trump said when the UFC fighters visited the White House on May 6.

Getty Images via AFP

Grant Dawson of the US grapples Mateusz Rebecki of Poland at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, Saturday. The White House event, featuring leading UFC fighters, will also coincide with President Donald Trump's 80th birthday

On Saturday, Trump shared images of the UFC arena on his Truth Social account, and the White House also released a promotional video of the event. PTI

B'desh HC rejects detained Hindu monk's bail plea

Ahsan Tasnim

Dhaka: Bangladesh High Court on Sunday rejected a bail petition of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das as he is being tried by a lower court in connection with a lawyer's killing in 2024 during clashes in Chittagong after he was denied bail in a sedition case.

Das's lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattacharya told reporters that two-judge bench of Justices KM Zahid Sarwar and Sheikh Abu Taher, however, set Monday for hearing bail petitions on four other cases against the monk. "HC rejected our bail petition as recording of witnesses testimony is underway in the trial (lower) court in Chittagong," Bhattacharya said.

Prosecutors earlier said 39 people were accused of junior govt prosecutor Saiful Islam Alif murder, while 23, including Das, were in custody to stand the trial in person with the remaining 16 absconding. Das's lawyer sought the bail saying the monk was languishing in jail for a long time with ailments.

On April 30 last year, HC granted him bail in the sedition case — allegedly insulting Bangladesh's national flag — but Supreme Court's apex appellate division subsequently stayed the bail order.

Balance is strategy, not a weakness, says B'desh PM's adviser

▶ Continued from page 1

Humaiun Kobir, Bangladesh PM Tarique Rahman's foreign affairs adviser Humaiun Kobir, emphasised that Dhaka would continue pursuing "balanced global engagement" as a strategic policy choice. "Balance is not a weakness. Balance is a strategy," he said.

BNP-led govt would pursue a "Bangladesh first" foreign doctrine grounded in pragmatism, strategic balance and national interest, he said. Responding to questions from diplomats, academics and policy experts, Humaiun said govt would avoid over-reliance on any single country and instead adopt a "flexible and multidimensional" diplomatic strategy.

Humaiun also questioned the relevance of the traditional foreign policy slogan "friendship to all, malice towards none", arguing that today's volatile geopolitical environment requires a more strategic and realistic approach. The new doctrine does not imply isolationism. but rather prioritising Bangladesh's sovereignty, development and national interests, he said.

He also argued that the new govt's democratic legitimacy strengthens Bangladesh's position on the global stage. "We are a legitimately elected govt with the mandate of the people. That gives us a position of strength in negotiations," he said.

On South Asian diplomacy, Kabir said govt wants to revive regional cooperation frameworks, including Saarc and Bimstec, believing stronger engagement would amplify Bangladesh's voice.

Munir calls 2025 conflict 'battle of two ideologies'

Surendra.Singh
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After Indian military leadership warned Islamabad on the first anniversary of Op Sindoor that "no terror sanctuary across the border is beyond India's reach", Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir on Sunday called last year's conflict with India a "battle between two ideologies".

Addressing a ceremony at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi to mark the first anniversary of 'Marka-e-Haq', the name given by Islamabad to four-day conflict with India, Munir claimed that Pakistan's strategy was "superior" to India's during the conflict.

"Marka-e-Haq was not merely a traditional war fought between two countries or militaries, but in reality, it was a decisive marka (battle) between two ideologies, in which, thanks to Allah, truth won and falsehood met with defeat," he said. Despite losing several air bases and military aircraft, Pakistan still claims to have prevailed over India during the conflict.

Meanwhile, in another telltale sign of army's dominance over civilian leadership, Pakistani federal minister for energy Ali Pervaiz Malik, a close aide of premier Shehbaz Sharif, said, "As an ordinary worker of the team led by PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, I want to assure the public that as petroleum prices decline in the international market..." His remark drew ire on social media.

S Korea welcomes rare baby bump

Kim Su-jin and her husband have set aside their doubts and embraced parenthood, joining a small but notable wave of South Korean couples having children despite the country's steep demographic decline.

South Korea has one of the world's lowest birth rates, and the govt has spent billions of dollars trying to encourage citizens to have more babies and cushion the worst impacts of a shrinking population. The Asian nation is still nowhere near reversing the trend, but a modest baby bump has come after years of consistently low statistics — even as experts disagree on the underlying causes.

South Korea's fertility rate hit a record low in 2023 but has picked up since then, with the number of monthly births consistently rising compared to the previous year. Nearly 23,000 babies were born in Feb, the most for that month in seven years, according to the statistics ministry. The on-year growth of 13.6% was the highest for any Feb since records began in 1981.

The uptick in births has tracked a similar rise in marriages going back to mid-2022, official figures show. Experts said the trend may reflect more positive attitudes towards family among younger South Koreans. AFP

China's marriage regn falls to lowest ever

China's marriage registrations in the first quarter fell to the lowest level on record for the three-month period. Data from the ministry of civil affairs show that 1.697 million couples registered to marry in the three months through March, down about 6.2% from a year earlier. China began publishing nationally comparable quarterly matrimony registration data in 2013, when marriages in the first quarter stood at 4.28million. BLOOMBERG

China, US to hold trade talks in S Korea next wk

Senior Chinese and US officials will hold talks in South Korea next week, Beijing's commerce ministry and Washington's treasury secretary said Sunday, ahead of an expected summit between leaders Xi Jinping and Donald Trump.

The Chinese commerce ministry said in a statement that Vice Premier He Lifeng, Beijing's top economic official, will attend "consultations on mutual economic and trade issues" on Tuesday and Wednesday. US teasury secretary Scott Bessent said in a post on X: "On Wednesday, I will stop in Seoul for a discussion with Vice Premier He Lifeng of China."

Trump is set to visit China for a high-stakes summit with Xi, with the two leaders expected to focus on easing tensions over trade and Taiwan, with the war in the Middle East looming large over talks. While Washington and Beijing slapped tit-for-tat tariffs on each other's exports a year ago, Trump and Xi agreed on a year-long trade truce at their Oct meeting in South Korea. AFP

DAILY PLANET

AFP

HANTAVIRUS SHIP EVACUEES BEGIN RETURNING HOME: Passengers head to board military buses after they were transferred from the Dutch flagged hantavirus-stricken cruise ship MV Hondius at the industrial port of Granadilla de Abona on the island of Tenerife in Spain's Canary Islands on Sunday. Three passengers from the MV Hondius have died, while others have fallen sick with the rare disease, which usually spreads among rodents. No vaccines or specific treatments exist for hantavirus, which is endemic in Argentina, where the ship departed in April. The evacuees changed into new protective equipment before boarding their repatriation flights, the first of which took 14 Spaniards to Madrid, where they will observe quarantine at a military hospital. AFP

Marilyn Monroe's hidden world heads to auction

Memorabilia belonging to late model and movie star Marilyn Monroe is heading to the auction block, offering a rare glimpse into the private world of one of Hollywood's most enduring legends. Items up for sale include pieces from her wardrobe, jewelry, letters, handwritten notes, paintings and poetry. Heritage Auctions is opening bidding to the public on items from the estate of poets Norman and Hedda Rosten, close friends and confidants of Monroe. The sale, which happens June 1, coincides with what would have been the star's 100th birthday.

Turkey may reopen Greek seminary in Istanbul

Turkey could reopen in Sept a Greek Orthodox seminary shut down more than 50 years ago, the patriarch of the Istanbul-based church said, according to Hurriyet newspaper on Sunday. The US and the EU have long pressed Turkey to reopen the theology school on Istanbul's Heybeliada island. Trump raised the issue during a White House meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last Sept, according to US Ambasssador Tom Barrack to Turkey. The school, which trained generations of Greek Orthodox leaders, was shut down by Turkey in 1971 under a law placing religious and military training under state control.

Anger, confusion as Louisiana Republicans move to erase majority-Black US House dist

Baton Rouge, Louisiana: As a child, Leona Tate was one of the "New Orleans Four," the first Black students to desegregate a public school in the deep South, enduring racial slurs and death threats as armed US Marshals escorted them to class.

On Friday, more than six decades later, Tate told Republican state lawmakers that their proposal to dismantle at least one majority-Black congressional district brought back harrowing memories. "I need you to understand what it feels like to stand here, to have walked through that mob as a child, and to now watch elected officials do the same thing that mob was trying to do — just with better suits and a parliamentary procedure," she told a senate committee hearing at the state capitol in Baton Rouge.

For more than eight hours, Black members of Congress, pastors, activists and voters delivered testimony that was at times emotional, angry and deeply personal. Outside the hearing room, protesters cheered them on. "Let him speak!" they chanted at one point, after Republican committee chairman Caleb Kleinpeter cut the microphone of a Democratic colleague in the middle of a fiery exchange.

Mike McClanahan, president of the state chapter of the NAACP, the country's largest civil rights organisation, was forcibly blocked from entering the room by security.

The tumultuous hearing reflected the electoral chaos gripping Louisiana after last week's US Supreme Court decision that hollowed out a landmark civil rights law, giving Republicans the chance to draw a new congressional map that erases one or both of the state's two Democratic-held majority-Black districts. Black voters make up one-third of the electorate in Louisiana and typically support Democrats. Republicans already control the other four districts.

The unprecedented national redistricting arms race that began last year, when President Trump pushed Texas Republicans to redraw the state's congressional map and take aim at five Democratic seats. REUTERS, AP

US SC UNDERMINES KEY PROVISION

- The US Supreme Court on April 29 **ruled in Louisiana v. Callais that Louisiana's congressional map,** which created a second Black-majority district, amounted to an unconstitutional racial gerrymander, **a decision critics say weakened protections under the Voting Rights Act of 1965**
- Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act **had allowed minorities to challenge electoral maps or rules** that diluted their voting strength
- The top court held that race played an impermissibly dominant role in drawing Louisiana's district boundaries, **a ruling widely viewed as benefiting Republicans**
- Voting-rights advocates say **the SC decision makes it significantly harder to challenge maps** that weaken minority representation
- Louisiana was the latest front in **a national redistricting war that began last year in Texas and gained momentum last week across the US South, including in Tennessee, Alabama and South Carolina,** where Republicans responded to the Supreme Court decision by launching similar efforts to eliminate majority-Black districts